9th International Art and the City Conference (Pilsen, 9-12 Jun 27)

Plzeň, University of West Bohemia, Jun 9–12, 2027
Deadline: Jan 31, 2027

Tijen Tunali

9th International Art and the City Conference: Art, Pluriversality and the City.

Since its inception in 2019, the Art and the City conference has traveled across several cities—including Tours, Berlin, Aarhus, Amman, Göttingen, Nice and Nicosia—facilitating an ongoing exploration of art's multifaceted relationship with the urban environment. In 2027, the 9th iteration of the conference will take place in Pilsen, the Czech Republic, with the institutional support of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of West Bohemia.

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.

2027 Theme: Art, Pluriversality, and the City
Pluriversality refers to a diverse and entangled web of worldviews, narratives, forms of knowledge, and ways of seeing, sensing, and relating to the world. It envisions a world in which multiple worlds coexist. Emerging from the Zapatistas' expression "un mundo en que quepan muchos mundos" (a world where many worlds fit), pluriverse challenges the assumption that there is a single

universal model of social organization, development, or knowledge to which all societies must conform. Rather than proposing a unified alternative to the existing world order, pluriversality affirms the possibility of multiple, interconnected ways of inhabiting and transforming the world without requiring them to conform to a single dominant logic.

The city is a particularly significant site for exploring these questions. Urban spaces bring together diverse histories, cultures, social relations, and forms of knowledge, but their coexistence is shaped by unequal distributions of power, resources, visibility, and access. Dominant urban development models frequently privilege particular forms of economic growth, property ownership, and spatial organization while marginalizing other ways of living, remembering, and relating to the urban as well as natural environment.

Artistic practices can play an important role in these processes. Through collective production, public interventions, situated practices, visual narratives, and alternative uses of urban space, art can make marginalized histories and forms of knowledge visible, challenge dominant representations, and create encounters across different experiences and political imaginaries. It can also contribute to the articulation of alternative relationships between humans, nonhuman life, and the environments they share. Pluriversality should not be understood as a celebration of diversity detached from the material conditions that shape urban life. The coexistence of multiple worlds is neither automatic nor free from conflict. It requires confronting the colonial legacies, capitalist relations, social inequalities, and ecological pressures that determine whose worlds are sustained and whose are displaced or rendered unviable. This perspective invites us to critically examine the contradictions of the relationship between artistic practices, cultural institutions, and space in the context of pluriversal city-making.

The conference therefore asks how art can contribute to the articulation of pluriversal urban futures without reducing difference to cultural representation or treating coexistence as a substitute for struggles over power and resources. How do artistic practices engage with the conflicts, solidarities, and negotiations through which different worlds encounter one another in the city? How might art help imagine and enact urban futures grounded in cooperation, mutual recognition, ecological interdependence, and collective self-determination?

We welcome theoretical, historical, and empirical contributions addressing, but not limited to, the following themes:

Art, decoloniality, and pluriversal worlds: Indigenous artistic practices, decolonial aesthetics, situated knowledge, and struggles for cultural and political self-determination.
Art and urban commons: Collective artistic production, shared spaces, community infrastructures, and alternative forms of urban governance.
Art, social movements, and urban resistance: Artistic activism, street art, protest aesthetics, anti-gentrification struggles, and movements for the right to the city.
Art, colonial histories, and urban memory: Contested heritage, public monuments, counter-memorial practices, and alternative histories of urban space.
Art, migration, and belonging: Displacement, borders, diasporic practices, urban identities, and competing claims to place and public space.
Art, capitalism, and the production of urban space: Gentrification, cultural commodification, city branding, tourism, and the political economy of urban cultural production.

Art, ecological justice, and urban environments: Urban ecologies, environmental struggles, multispecies relations, and artistic responses to ecological transformation.
Art, knowledge, and collective imagination: Alternative epistemologies, embodied and experiential knowledge, participatory practices, and the production of collective futures.
Art, public space, and political authority: Censorship, surveillance, authoritarianism, contested public space, and the conditions of artistic freedom.
Art, cooperation, and alternative urban futures: Solidarity networks, autonomous spaces, collective practices, and experiments in more equitable and ecologically just forms of urban life.

By bringing together researchers, artists, theorists, architects, curators, and social workers, Art and the City 2026 seeks to advance dialogue on how art—whether as intervention, critique, or form of care—participates in the shaping of urban ecologies and imaginaries today. The conference is particularly interested in local and regional geopolitical contexts and their theories that go beyond the simplified dichotomy of the global South/North.

Academic Keynote
Robert Nilsson Mohammadi, Society and Culture, Malmö University

Artist Speaker
Epos 257

Scientific Committee 2027
Inga Bryden, Cultural History, University of Winchester
Jose Vela Castillo, History of Architecture, IE School of Architecture and Design
Christakis Christofi, French and European Studies, University of Cyprus
David Todd Lawrance, English, University of Saint Thomas
Lina Michelkevičė, Visual Arts, Vilnius Academy of Arts
Cecile Sachs Olsen, Art and Society, Oslo Metropolitan University
Jeffrey I. Ross, Criminology, University of Baltimore
Zohrey Soltani, Art and Architecture, New York University
Tijen Tunali, Art History, Käte Hamburger Kolleg, RWTH Aachen University
Petr Vašát, Anthropology, The Czech Academy of Sciences and University of West Bohemia.

Submission Guidelines
Contributors are invited to submit abstracts of up to 500 words, accompanied by a brief 100-word biographical note to Tijen Tunali (ttunali.artandthecity@gmail.com) and Petr Vašát (petr.vasat@gmail.com) with the header "9th Art & City Conference" by January 31, 2027.

Important Dates
Abstract Submission Deadline: January 31, 2027
Notification of Acceptance: February 28, 2027
Registration Deadline: April 30, 2027

Excursion and Conference Fee
The fourth day of the conference (June 12th) will feature an excursion designed to engage participants with the city of Pilsen, continuing the Art and the City tradition of contextual engagement. A minimal conference fee will cover lunch and coffee breaks for 3 days, conference dinner, and the

guided excursion.

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 2027 edition will not produce formal conference proceedings; instead, selected papers will be invited for publication in the journal arte:lugar:cidade.

Reference:

CFP: 9th International Art and the City Conference (Pilsen, 9-12 Jun 27). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 2, 2026 (accessed Nov 2, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54805>.