

25.-29. MAY 2026

UNICART BIP / OULU, FINLAND

Transdisciplinary Artistic Methods for Post-Industrial Urban Chance

What

This Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) brings together PhD and advanced master's students from across the UNIC alliance and other universities to explore how artistic methodologies can be used to understand, interrogate, and transform urban spaces. Through hands-on workshops, collaborative projects, and critical discussion, participants will engage with art-as-research approaches to urban change, contributing to sustainable and inclusive city revitalisation.

Where

The BIP is held at the University of Oulu, Finland. Some of the workshops are held in Meri-Toppila, which is a post-industrial urban area, originally home to a factory designed by renowned architect Alvar Aalto and now inhabited by nearly 3,000 people. Located about 3 km from downtown, this socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhood has a diverse and highly mobile population.

Goal

The workshop's goal is to incorporate the community's aspirations for the future into both physical structures and theoretical documentation, building on the renovation work of Alvar Aalto's wood chip silo. Working groups of students and other stakeholders will be guided by local and international professionals to engage and work in a place-making experience.

Party

The project will culminate in a closing festival featuring live music and other art shows at AaltoSiilo. Oulu is the European Capital of Culture 2026 with a plethora of art events taking place during this BIP.

Objectives

- Foster transdisciplinary collaboration between arts, urban studies, architecture, and social sciences.
- Integrate artistic methodologies into urban inquiry and practice to address complex challenges.
- Develop participants' capacity to design thoughtful, situated artistic interventions in contested urban spaces.

Methods & Learning Outcomes

- Explore contested urban spaces and industrial histories, including ethical considerations of artistic practice.
- Use artistic and sensory methods to surface hidden facets of place and space.
- Manage and configure data within artistic frameworks and fieldwork practices.
- Employ improvisation as a research tool in the arts.
- Design spatial/public interventions and consider audiences as co-creators.
- Articulate how artistic methodologies constitute a distinct mode of research and how they can inform your own practice.

Programme Format

1. Preparatory online seminars (late April / early May 2026) to frame key concepts, histories, ethics, and case studies.
2. Five-day intensive, on-site workshops developing practical artistic research methods in the city.
3. Small-group concept development of an artistic intervention for urban transformation.
4. Final morning presentations (pass/fail), with feedback from the teaching team.

Who Should Apply

- PhD and advanced Master's students from UNIC and other universities.
- Backgrounds in urban studies, art and artistic research, social sciences, architecture, or related fields.
- Familiarity with urban studies and/or art history is recommended.

Assessment & Recognition

- Active participation across online and on-site components is required.
 - Group presentation of an artistic intervention concept on the final day.
 - Grading: Pass/Fail.
 - Successful completion awards 5 ECTS.
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UNIC Connection

This BIP is part of a UNIC series exploring Artistic Methodologies for Urban Transformation within Thematic Line 7 (Art, Culture and Creativity). Together, these BIPs contribute to the evolving UNICART BIP concept—an approach to enhancing the use of artistic methods in post-industrial urban problem solving. This does not make other universities ineligible to participate - on the contrary, UNIC is open for cooperation.

Application & Selection

- Application window: February 2026 (confirmation by 15 March 2026).
- Selection based on academic background, motivation, language proficiency, and alignment with programme objectives.
- Cohort size: approximately 10–30 participants (3–5 per partner).

Funding & Practicalities

- Each selected student applies for Erasmus+ funding via their home university to cover travel and accommodation.
- The University of Oulu does not cover travel or accommodation costs.
- Participation requires full attendance in both the virtual and on-site components.

Coordination Team

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Partner Institutions

UNIC Universities: Malmö etc.

Note: Details are subject to change.

