

Press Release – 31st of July 2025, Gelsenkirchen

Manifesta 16 Ruhr Launches Open Call: *This is not a Church*

Manifesta 16 Ruhr, the 16th edition of the European Nomadic Biennial, announces its Open Call for local projects, inviting initiatives, collectives, institutions and individuals from across the Ruhr Area to propose interdisciplinary socio-cultural projects co-developed with the biennial. The biennial, taking place from the 21st of June until the 4th of October 2026, aims to stimulate projects that are rooted in local contexts —initiated with, for and by communities — to foster long-term cultural engagement and co-creation beyond the biennial itself.

Manifesta 16 Ruhr will unfold across the Ruhr Area in the summer of 2026. Through close collaboration with local communities, Manifesta 16 engages with social, political and environmental issues, offering new perspectives on the historical and contemporary fabric of the Ruhr Area. Manifesta 16 Ruhr functions as a catalyst for change by addressing socio-cultural issues, sparking dialogue, challenging conventions and ultimately leaving a legacy in region. The biennial will repurpose post-war church buildings to re-think how these deconsecrated spaces, being demolished or abandoned at a rapid rate in Germany, can yet again serve the communities and become renewed axes for cohesion and collaboration within neighbourhoods.

OPEN CALL FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

Each edition of Manifesta includes an Open Call which invites local initiatives, collectives and individuals from civil society to propose projects connected to the biennial. Manifesta 16 Ruhr welcomes project partners that bring diverse groups together, strengthening community bonds through arts, music, literature, ecology, sports, democracy and beyond. Projects should highlight shared perspectives within the Ruhr Area's diverse society and preferably take place in or near a (previous) place of worship in the Ruhr Area.

The 11 selected project partners will have a collaboration agreement with Manifesta 16 Ruhr which includes a financial contribute of up to €15,000 and will become part of the Manifesta 16 PLUS programme, running alongside the main biennial programme. A jury of local and international cultural professionals will select the projects which can take place across the Ruhr Area. The jury is committed to selecting projects that catalyse community-led engagement and that are developed collaboratively and embedded locally ensuring relevance, sustainability and lasting impact.

The Open Call will accept project proposals until the 30th of September 2025.

For submission criteria, terms and conditions and dates of the Open Call information sessions, visit manifesta16.org/opencall.

Notes to the Editors

Manifesta 16 Ruhr will take place in various cities across the Ruhr Area from the 21st of June to the 4th of October 2026.

About Manifesta 16: manifesta16.org

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REGIONALVERBAND
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Funding Partners

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