



ART & TECH
Oulu 2026 European
Capital of Culture



OULU
UTC +2 h

**Everyday, 2.6 billion people are using
technology developed in Oulu.**



Cultural Climate Change

Peace Machine
Reconnecting Flagship

Brave Hinterland
Theme
Climate Clock
Flagship

Programme Line
Northern Vibes

Let It Snow!
Arctic Food Lab
Aurora Revelare
Hope in the Hinterland
In Europe's Spotlight

Programme Line
Between East & West

Tar Wharf to the Seven Seas
2nd Generation
Cultural Embassy
E75 Highway
Looking East
Village Anthems

Programme Line
Naturally Art

Natural Stages
Art and Nature Trails
Borderless
Sámi Culture
Climate Arena

Programme Line
Dark Matters

Light Matters
Voice the Taboo!
Mindblown -
Borderlines of the Mind
Parts of a City

Programme Line
Oulu Calling!

Faravid's Land
The Snowflake
Stone Age
Survival Strategies
From Here to Art
- Travel Agency

Cool Contrasts
Theme
Underground Clash
Flagship

Programme Line
Art <3 Tech

ArTech City
Oulu Dance Hack
Tomorrow's Wardrobe
Beyond the Sky
Earth, Time
and Adaptation

Wild City
Theme
OPERA GOES WILD
**The Rise of the
Tar Kingdom**
Flagship

Programme Line
Art Takeover!

Delta Life
Exploring ARTT
The Art of Work
Hybridise your Festival
Bang Bang Riviera

Programme Line
Creative Villages

Pikisaari Creative Island
Hiukkavaara
- Creative Boot Camp
SmART Hospital
Rethinking Libraries
Creative Campus
#CultureMonopoly
AALTOSILO
The Nook

Programme Line
STREAM to the Future

Go with the STREAM
Art Seeds
Children's Biennale
Frozen Nights

Programme Line
Urban Boost

Untamed Office
Agent 026
MC Oulu
Generation Xulu

Creative places

An aerial photograph of a creative district situated along a large body of water. The scene is filled with trees in vibrant autumn colors of yellow and orange. In the foreground, a large brick building with a grey roof is prominently featured, with the word 'GALLERIA' written in white on its side. To the right, a wooden dock extends into the water, with a sign that reads 'VENETAXI'. Several small boats are visible on the water. In the background, a city skyline is visible across the water, and a large green lawn with people walking is in the middle ground. The overall atmosphere is bright and lively.



Art takeover

Steam



Light Art



class onson

An aerial photograph of a wooden boardwalk or pier extending over a rocky beach. The boardwalk is lined with people and a dog, and is bordered by a rope with red floats. The surrounding area is filled with large, dark grey rocks and patches of white sand or snow. The text "Cultural history" is overlaid in the center in a large, white, bold font.

Cultural history

A photograph of two kayakers paddling down a narrow waterway flanked by tall reeds. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright reflection on the water. The kayakers are silhouetted against the light sky. The text "Natural stages" is overlaid in the center in a large, white, bold font.

Natural stages



Arctic Joy

A woman with long, wavy hair is shown from the chest up, holding a glowing, futuristic object. The object is illuminated with various colors, including green, blue, and orange, and appears to be a piece of art or technology. The background is black, making the glowing object and the woman's face stand out. The text "Horizontal theme: Art & Tech" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Horizontal theme: Art & Tech

Art & Tech in Oulu2026

1. Media Arts

-International flagship exhibitions and productions using digitality

2. Streaming

-We promise that 70% of cultural content will be available digitally

3. Digitality in our Cultural History

-Our history will come alive with the help of VR





Programme Line: ART<3TECH

Every day, nearly three billion people use mobile technology developed in Oulu. The city has long been a pioneer in technology research, product development and start-ups – and now it wants to take over Art&Tech. The models used to produce the culture of the future will increasingly utilise a hybrid strategy, a combination of virtual and physical experiences.

CCC Factor: sustainable and accessible culture, humanising digital culture, future art platforms

Overall Budget: 2 150 000€

ArTech City

What does a city connecting technology and science with art and creativity look like? What will the cultural field be like post-pandemic? Turning Oulu into an ArTech City requires a rethink. We also recognise - and will build into STREAM to the Future - this connection between arts, science and technology. ArTech City brings together European cities who share an interest in developing interaction between art and technology through the following events and processes:

European ArTech Network

A European-wide network will be launched where cities and regions, together with technology companies, RDI organisations, creative as well as the cultural industries and art professionals will be able to meet, learn and share their experiences, knowledge and good practices. How can cities best develop a platform that will boost collaboration between technology and culture is the central question facing this ecosystem. The European ArTech Network will explore this question through matchmaking events, webinars, seminars, expert visits and residencies. Through the network, we will be able to better recognise our role within the international field of art and technology, discover our unique strengths and build up our position in these areas.

ArTech Festival

The international ArTech Festival will showcase new innovations and pilots combining media art and art and technology, sourced via open international calls. Held in conjunction with the Lumo Light Festival, it will host an extensive networking event for European cities as well as a matchmaking event for artists, technology innovators and entrepreneurs.

ArTech Pilots

In the search for future solutions, rapid experimentation and piloting with companies and artists are the methods adopted to design innovative and interactive technology-based cultural products and services. One of the main focus areas here is streaming, highly popular in current cultural productions, where elements of interaction still require strengthening. Here, we are collaborating with European festivals through the ambitious Hybridise Your Festival project.

ArTech Spaces

To match the high-quality level of ArTech productions, great spaces for their delivery and consumption are needed. A new immersive art and technology space will be built for the Museum and Science Centre Luuppi. **Deep Space allows for a completely unique experience** that will be utilised in, for example, cultural heritage demonstrations, gigs, events, expert visits, works of art and games. Further, Oulu University of Applied Sciences is preparing funding to develop a digital production space suitable for teaching, RDI and professional productions. Oulu2026 is negotiating partnership options that would ensure access to the space for both public and private sector users.

Producer: Oulu2026

Partners: Linz Ars Electronica (AT), Oulu University of Applied Sciences (FI), University of Oulu (FI), Lumo Light Festival (FI), Museum and Science Centre Luuppi (FI), A network of European cities: Cities of Aveiro (PT), Ghent (BE), Tallinn (EE), Coventry (UK), Edinburgh (UK), Eindhoven (NL)

Budget: €€€

Hybridise Your Festival

Covid-19 has crushed the events industry. Under this existential pressure, imaginative event producers have however shown their ingenuity and resilience. Livestreams have filled our living rooms. It's clear that we can't digitally replace the live atmosphere with its genuine flavours and scents. But that's not the point. It is not either-or rather, it is both-and. The hybrid.

The Hybridise Your Festival project brings together an international network of event organisers and professionals in the gaming and the audio-visual sectors to share the prodigious variety of Oulu Region festivals direct to your smart device via digital channels. VR. AR. Whatever the letter combination is, digital technologies can provide a different live experience. Add something to it. Allow a new kind of accessibility. Interaction with the on-site audience. More audiences.

We need new kinds of skills to allow our events to be experienced smoothly across different channels. We will gain the flexibility to face the viruses and scourges of the

future. To be more confident that our cultural programme will be transmitted to Europe, rain or shine. There's an entirely new frontier to explore in consuming culture using new technologies, be an early adopter and get ready to turn on, tune in and ... we'll even try to make sure you don't drop out!

Producer: Oulu2026

Partners: North Finland Film Commission (FI), The European Festivals Association (EFA), LiveFin (FI), Nitra2026 (SK), local festivals

Budget: €€



Oulu Dance Hack

A celebration of the spirit of Oulu, despite being located on the margins of Europe, pushing the boundaries of technology and art to raise the profile of Oulu as a world-class dance and technology hub.

Oulu Dance Hack incorporates local artists selected through an open call on a variety of levels, including students from the local universities. During the festival in early 2026, a large-scale projection will be displayed on the festival site, looping a film featuring 1000 local dancers. It will be mapped onto the building so that the dance emerges from the features of the façade. Additionally, the producer, Taika-Box, will bring three specially commissioned international performances to Oulu where the **artists will also work as mentors for a special edition of Oulu Dance Hack for young people** and local professional artists to provide them with professional development opportunities.

A one-week dance and technology festival, Oulu Dance Hack, brings dance, media and other artists from around the world to Oulu to explore new technology in a performance context through a programme of workshops, talks and seminars. Oulu Dance Hack also invites local technology businesses to provide their products offering unique opportunities to artists to collaborate in the creation of short performances, installations and dance films while also providing businesses with the opportunity to showcase their innovations to the public. The festival will end with performances of the pieces created during the week.

Producer: TaikaBox (FI)

Partners: eTOPIA Centre for Art and Technology – Zaragoza (ES); CINETic International Centre for Research and Education in Innovative and Creative Technologies in association

with the National University of Theatre and Film – Bucharest (RO); Central Europe Dance Theatre in association with Pro Progressione (Cultural Organisation) – Budapest (HU); Dansinitiativet - Production House/ Venue - Luleå (SE), Oulu University of Applied Sciences (FI), City Dance (FI), Oulu Museum of Art (FI), Probot Oy (FI), BusinessOulu (FI), Studio Sillo at Culture Power Station ry (FI)

Budget: €€

Beyond the Sky

Open your eyes to the universe where artistic space images meet music and transport you to new galaxies. Experience the sky in all its glory and witness the birth and death of the stars while enjoying the sound of a symphony orchestra combined with soloists and live electronics in Oulu's pedestrian Rotuaari Promenade. Beyond the Sky is a unique project where art meets science to make 'the stars' accessible to everyone.

With the help of technology, space images are projected onto fog clouds along Rotuaari Promenade. Returning some of the unique photos taken and projecting them back onto the sky has been a long-term desire of the artist behind the installation, the self-proclaimed astroanarchist, **Jukka-Pekka Metsävainio**, whose previous works include a 3D book on cosmic clouds together with the Queen guitarist and astrophysicist **Brian May** and writer **David J. Eicher**. To further enliven the visual elements, a soundscape will be composed by a Finnish composer and musician **Lauri Porra**.

Producers: Jukka-Pekka Metsävainio (FI), Oulu2026, Oulu Symphony Orchestra (FI), Lumo Light Festival (FI)

Budget: €€



Elephant's Trunk Nebula

UNDERGROUND CLASH: JAKOB KUDSK STEENSEN



Reconnecting Flagship

Peace Machine

Changing the cultural climate in Europe will change the way we communicate and how we promote peace. Not just peace as the absence of conflict, but peace as a trustful, sharing and caring cultural climate.

The European Union was founded as a peace project after the ruins of war. Within an increasingly polarised Europe the potential for violence and conflict is rising - hate speech has historically been the match which lit the tinderbox of war. The Peace Machine concept searches for new ways to resolve conflicts and promote dialogue, improving Europe's cultural climate and redefining common interests and common humanity. In order to avoid repeating history, we must be able to recognise the seeds of conflict in hate speech, discrimination and 'othering'.

The Peace Machine programme is rooted in the life work of the Finnish scientist **Timo Honkela**, an artificial intelligence researcher who studied at the University of Oulu. Honkela died all too young, in May 2020, but his life work lives on. Honkela's dream was to create a machine using artificial intelligence to facilitate conflict resolution and promote world peace.

Immersive Peace Machine - Combining Art and Tech

The Peace Machine combines art and technology which can be experienced as an immersive aesthetic experience. The Finnish *Ekho Collective* will lead the design consisting of the overall artistic concept and principles of interaction and facilitation enabled by artificial intelligence, machine learning and machine vision. Thus, the Machine will learn from interaction with users, who then become co-producers of the Peace Machine.

The Peace Machine is based on modular architecture and is usable simultaneously and virtually in different places. In 2026, the work will be on display in Oulu as well as in the winning Slovak ECoC city. In 2027, the Peace Machine's journey will continue to the winning ECoC cities from Portugal and Latvia. With an open international programme call we invite artists to build their own Peace Machines, to address issues of war, peace and conflict, building common comprehension through different forms of art.

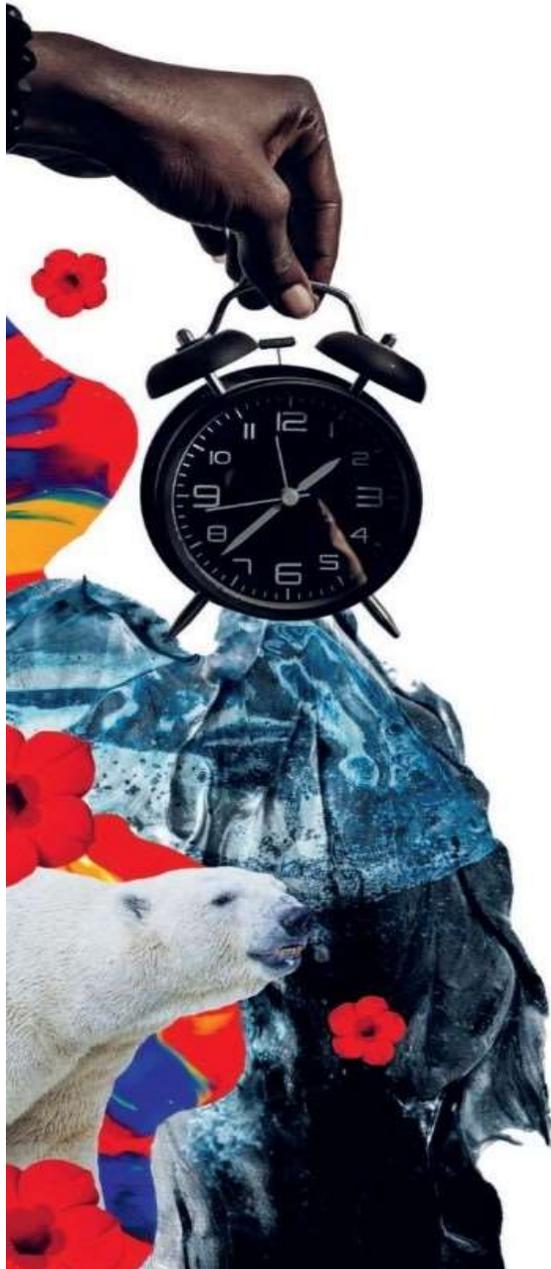
Peace Machine Kids - Let's Explore Peace!

The future belongs to the children! In 2021-2025, we invite kids in schools and kindergartens to build prototypes of the Peace Machine. Prototyping is fun, at the same time it is a part of the STEAM philosophy, where children and young people themselves can explore the nature of conflicts and learn to resolve them through science, art and technology.

Peace School is a method of peace promotion and global education based on drama and participatory methods, created by the Peace Union. Peace School challenges students to think about global development issues, peace and non-violence in their own lives while reflecting on conflict at a global level.

The working methods are participatory drama, role play, process drama and other participatory methods. Each student is empowered to engage in their own critical thinking and to increase their empathy and dialogue skills as well as their respect for diversity. Through the ECoCs across Europe and our twin cities we will invite European peers and children to join in during the Oulu2026 programme.





Programme Line: BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Oulu exploring its roots and the routes linking it to Europe. These routes shaped the identity, cultural and societal development of the city and deserve exploring.
CCC factor: cultural influences, renewing European connections, celebrating the edges of Europe
Overall Budget: 1 650 000 €

Tar Wharf to the Seven Seas

What caused Oulu's Cultural Climate Change in the late 19th century? The black gold of the North. Oulu had its feet deep in wood tar in the late 19th century which made it one of the world's leading export harbours for shipping tar around Europe. Some even claim wood tar from Oulu was the secret ingredient that powered Britain's Royal Navy to sail the seven seas. But the historical memory of the place and impact of wood tar on our region and beyond has dimmed over the years.

Tar Wharf to the Seven Seas will be a European journey which tells an exciting story of the wood tar trade and how it shaped who we are even today. Following the historic tar transport route from Kainuu region to Oulu, the project will enrich the region with stories, sights and prehistoric remains of the route through digital content and augmented reality.

Historical research will be combined with tar-related artistic events and exhibitions, reconnecting Oulu to cities, such as Stockholm, Copenhagen, Hull, Liverpool, Marseille, London and Cadiz, all of which were once linked to Oulu through the export of the black gold of the North. In addition to a number of tar-related events in the municipalities along the historical wood tar transport route, the Northern Ostrobothnia Museum will create an exhibition taking the visitor on a journey with the tar. It will highlight both the local historical impact of the trade and its importance to the world economy and the shipbuilding sector in Europe's golden era of sail.

Producers: Museum and Science Centre Luuppi (FI), Oulu2026
Partners: Musei Civici di Modena (IT), Finnish Youth Council Allianssi (FI), Humanpolis Oy (FI), Metsähallitus (FI), The Danish National Museum (DK), European Cities and their museums along the Tar Route, Municipalities of Muhos, Utajärvi, Vaala, Kajaani, Paltamo, Sotkamo, Kuhmo and Suomussalmi (FI)
Where: Municipalities along the Tar Route
Budget: €€€

SUM UP

- Choose technology first
- Create new formats
- Humanize technology: think of the overall experience of what the audience needs on the sofa at home (catering, interaction)
- Build an ecosystem where engineers and artists meet
- Digitality and immersiveness are the biggest opportunities in future culture making and accessibility



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