

Annex 1

Introducing the 12 venues of Manifesta 16 Ruhr

18th of June, 2026

Kulturkirche Liebfrauen, Duisburg

Presented by Creative Mediators:
Michael Kurtz & Henry Meyric Hughes

Participants:
Julian Irlinger, Athina Koumparouli, Elizabeth Price, Emil Walde, Abbas Zahedi

Kulturkirche Liebfrauen was built in the late 1950s to replace its war-destroyed predecessor and serve a growing population. With its vast scale and modernist form, the church became an icon of Duisburg's post-war boom. Then, in 2011, after decades of dwindling congregations and years lying empty, it was converted into an arts centre. The building's sixty-five-year life – its hopeful origins, quick decline and subsequent transformation – mirrors the city's recent history, from mid-century revival to post-industrial struggle.

Here, five artists directly engage with the built environment, seeking to understand the significance of Kulturkirche Liebfrauen as both

a product of its time and a prominent feature of present-day Duisburg. Their films and installations investigate the visual character and ageing fabric of the building and the Ruhr Area beyond. By extension, some of the projects question the values and power structures built into the church's design. While they express admiration for the achievements of earlier generations and commemorate what has been lost over time, they also demand new aesthetic and social forms. Looking at, listening to and touching our surroundings becomes a way of thinking about society in the past and future. What stories might the building tell?

Markuskirche, Essen

**Presented by Creative Mediators:
Michael Kurtz & Henry Meyric Hughes**

**Participants:
Sara Bichão, Lilli Lake, PELE, Augustas
Serapinas**

Early Christians labelled the central area of a church the *navis*, meaning ship, which is why we now call it the “nave”. Inspired by the story of Noah’s ark, they imagined the church as a vessel carrying congregants through the dangers of the world towards salvation. Churches also bear a physical resemblance to great boats. The ceiling of Markuskirche with its symmetrical wooden form, surrounded by expanses of blue and purple stained glass, recalls an oak prow gliding through shimmering waters.

The church has long been an anchor for its neighbourhood: a kindergarten, a school and a community centre stand close by, and everyday life in the quarter has gathered in and around it for generations. That makes its future a question

for the whole community, not for a congregation alone. In this situation, the old idea of the church as a vessel might help us think about what we need as a society and imagine what the building could become. If floodwaters were rising and the church was a ship, we would cherish it as a communal resource. What would we gather and preserve from the past? What would we build for the future? If the church could set sail, where would we go?

Participants in Markuskirche engage in this imaginative exercise. Instead of mourning the church’s forthcoming closure, they embrace the building that remains, animating its old fabric with a new sense of activity and motion.

St. Gertrud, Essen

Presented by Creative Mediators:
René Block & Leonie Herweg

Participants:
Halil Altındere, Ayşe Erkmen, Mona Hatoum,
Pravdoliub Ivanov, Šejla Kamerić, Jarosław
Kozłowski, Olaf Metzel, Donja Nasser, Navid
Nuur, Nasan Tur

Upon entering St. Gertrud, one moves through a space marked by layered histories. Rebuilt after the Second World War, the church combines older foundations with a restrained, modern interior. Its high ceilings, clear lines and filtered light create an atmosphere that is both open and concentrated, where small shifts in material, scale and sound become immediately perceptible. Today, the building is part of a recently founded initiative of the Hochschule der Bildenden Künste (HBK) Essen and has become a place of artistic education and practice – another layer to its ongoing use and interpretation. The works gathered here engage with this sensitivity. Many begin with familiar objects, images or situations, only to alter them through displacement, fragmentation or distortion. Materials appear unstable, meanings remain open, and what seems fixed can shift. Several works draw on political realities, systems of power or collective memory, but

indirectly, through gesture, irony or reduction. Sound and voice move through the space. Rather than following a fixed path, one moves freely – pausing, listening, returning – while the architecture shapes how sound travels and bodies gather, making one's position part of the experience. Under the title *Exercises in Respect*, the presentations attend to the church's history, spatial conditions and continued significance. The works operate not through stable narratives but through tension: between presence and absence, visibility and concealment, control and unpredictability. As you spend time here, different elements come into focus gradually, unfolding with your movement and attention. Yet, not everything is inside. A short walk away, at the entrance to the nearby Rheinischer Platz subway station, one work extends the exhibition out into the city – a reminder that it reaches beyond these walls, into the surrounding neighbourhood.

St. Marien, Essen

Presented by Creative Mediators:
René Block & Leonie Herweg

Participants:
Jason Dodge, William Engelen, Katharina Fritsch, Annika Kahrs, Jarosław Kozłowski, Alicja Kwade, Mira M. Yang, SUPERFLEX, Evita Vasiljeva, Amanda Ziemele

St. Marien is located in Essen-Karnap, a district shaped by industry, labour and migration. Built in the early 1960s, the church served a community tied to the nearby coal mines and factories. This history remains present in the neighbourhood and in the character of the building itself. The church is scheduled for demolition, placing the presentations within a moment of transition and impending change. Inside, the architecture is defined by clarity and openness. Light enters through tall windows, and the space is structured to accommodate both gathering and circulation. It retains a sense of directness that informs how the works are encountered.

The participants presented here often begin with existing materials, images and situations, such as objects from daily life, industrial production or shared visual culture. These are reworked, translated or recontextualised, allowing new meanings to emerge. Processes of making,

repetition and transformation are central: something is taken from one context and set into another. Several works engage with questions of value, labour and exchange. Others explore memory, language or systems that structure perception. Consistent attention is given to how relations are formed between people, objects and environments. Installed across the church, the works unfold in dialogue with its architecture: along axes of movement, in relation to light and within the rhythm of the space. As you move through the building, connections between works emerge gradually. Under the title *Exercises in Respect*, the presentations consider the church as a site embedded in its social and material context. What emerges is a network of references linking the immediate surroundings to wider social, economic and cultural conditions.

St. Josef, Gelsenkirchen

Presented by Creative Mediator:
Josep Bohigas

Participants:
Havîn Al-Sîndy, Curro Claret, Dúo Barber-Palacios, Penique Production

St. Josef is a neo-Gothic church saturated with iconography: vaults, columns, stained glass and liturgical furniture build a dense, codified system of symbolic control, designed to shape how people move, behave and think. The project does not erase this condition but suspends it. In collaboration with the Catalan collective Penique Productions, a large inflatable membrane veils the interior, fills the nave and neutralises its symbolic charge. Rather than confronting the church, the intervention displaces it: the space becomes a continuous, immersive environment – neither sacred nor profane, but open – where previous meanings are suspended and new uses can emerge.

This transformation extends to the furniture: in workshops with Catalan designer Curro Claret, residents and students dismantled and

reconfigured the pews. Objects designed to impose passive, hierarchical positions become something that encourages new ways of being together: more horizontal, more unstable, less predictable. The church no longer functions as a place of worship, but has not yet become a fixed facility either. Instead, it is a contested space: without stable programme or guaranteed use, exposed to appropriation, conflict and everyday negotiation. Prior to Manifesta 16 Ruhr, Social BallerZ e.V. – a Gelsenkirchen basketball collective for youth, inclusion and community – activated the church as an open court every Thursday night through the biennial's Warm-Up Programme. Their hope to return afterwards and transform the space into a community sports facility is already written into the project's logic.

St. Anna – Hatay Engin Music Hall, Gelsenkirchen

Presented by Creative Mediator:

Gürsoy Doğtaş Scenographers: Bureau LADA
(Ema Dabrović, Lada Hršak, Katarina Pedišić)

Participants:

Emre Abut, Cana Bilir-Meier, Constructlab,
İhsan Ece, Philipp Gufler, Cihangir
Gümüştürkmen, Nejla Gür, Gašper Kunšič,
Jannis Psychopedis, Mesut-Sabuha Salaam,
Ming Wong, Hanefi Yeter

Music travels with people long before they feel at home in a new place. It carries voices, languages and memories across distances, without being tied to any single location. A song can offer comfort, convey a sense of belonging, name a loss or forge a connection between people living apart. Music speaks to heritage but also to how people can settle into a new life and build relationships. It allows a way of finding one's place that goes beyond simply fitting in or withdrawing. This was particularly clear among the "guest workers" who began arriving in the Federal Republic from the mid-1950s under formal recruitment agreements between governments: what they sang, played and listened to became a kind of moving archive – it captured what was left behind while

simultaneously opening a space for something new to emerge in an unfamiliar place. The Hatay Engin Music Hall takes individual moments from this comprehensive history as its starting point: visual artists take up and examine the relation between music and how gender and sexuality are expressed across different cultures. As its name suggests, the hall is also a place to listen to music. The music hall is named after the singer Hatay Engin (1948–2020), who was educated at the Istanbul Conservatory and came to Berlin at the beginning of the 1970s. He became one of the defining voices of Turkish art music (*Sanat Müziği*) and developed – far beyond Berlin – into a central figure of the musical diaspora.

St. Bonifatius – Ferdane Satır Tea Garden, Gelsenkirchen

Presented by Creative Mediator:

Gürsoy Doğtaş

Scenographers:

**Bureau LADA (Ema Dabrović, Lada Hršak,
Katarina Pedišić)**

Participants:

Mehmet Aksoy, Begzada Alatović, Özlem Altın, Atiye Altül, Akbar Behkalam, Bureau Baubotanik, Vlassis Caniaris, İsmail Çoban, Yıldırım Denizli, İhsan Ece, Füzuzan, Abuzer Güler, Nejla Gür, Judith Hopf, Merve Kaplan, Justin Lieberman, Julia Logothetis, Mihály Moldvay, Jannis Psychopedis, Metin Talayman, Rıza Topal, Yıldız Tüzün, Nil Yalter, Hanefi Yeter

When “guest workers” planted their first gardens, something new took shape: their own piece of land in a foreign place. Soil they could work with their hands, from which tomatoes and beans grew, on which cherry and other fruit trees could be planted. A place for the grill, the backgammon table, for gatherings with family, friends and colleagues. The garden was both a usable space and an expanded living room – somewhere to tend, to rest and to call one’s own, where the confinement of small apartments gave way to something more open. Its value becomes clear against what came before: the agreements that brought workers to West Germany from 1955 housed them in dormitories and barracks; a garden had no place there, because a garden implies putting down roots – and putting down roots was precisely what the “guest workers” were not supposed to do. The Ferdane Satır Tea Garden honours the

first gardens of these labour migrants. With outdoor and indoor displays, the exhibition takes up motifs from their gardens: flora and fauna, growing, eating, being together, home furnishing – and the contrast between working underground and standing on one’s own ground. The tea garden is named after Ferdane Satır (1944–1984), who came to Duisburg-Wanheimerort in 1976 from the Adana province through the family reunification programme. She was known for her care and neighbourliness. On the night of the 26th of August 1984, she and four of her children – Çiğdem (7), Ümit (5), Songül (4) and Zeliha (18) – her son-in-law Rasim Turhan (18) and her 52-day-old grandson Tarık Turhan were killed in a racist arson attack in Duisburg.

Thomaskirche – Hava Güleç Living Room, Gelsenkirchen

Presented by Creative Mediator:

Gürsoy Doğtaş

Scenographers:

**Bureau LADA (Ema Dabrović, Lada Hršak,
Katarina Pedišić)**

Participants:

**Mehmet Aksoy, Bettina Allamoda, Atiye Altül,
Ayzit Bostan, Fatma Ceylan, Yıldırım Denizli,
Gülbin Ünlü, Hava Güleç, Mehmet Güler,
Abuzer Güler, Nejla Gür, Muhlis Kenter, Azade
Köker, Julia Logothetis, Asimina Paradissa,
Judith Raum, Dennis Siering, Nesrin Tanç,
Weberei Kai, Serpil Yeter, Hanefi Yeter**

The women who came to the Federal Republic as labour migrants from the late 1950s onwards arrived from many countries – villages and capitals, ethnic and religious communities, social classes and educational backgrounds. They brought their own languages, histories, professions and knowledge. In the Federal Republic, they were met with a single term – “guest worker” – that collapsed this diversity into one economic function. Their precision and dexterity made them sought-after skilled labourers, yet they were consistently placed in the lowest wage groups. These women were also community builders, artists and artisans. The Hava Güleç Living Room brings their works together with works from other artists, some of whom came to the Federal Republic alongside them and expressed solidarity with the “guest workers.” The focus on textile work opens a field

where material, technology, memory and text are woven together, poetically and critically. The exhibition does not consider itself complete. Aware of its gaps, it remains open throughout its run to textile works by “guest workers” that have mostly been preserved in domestic settings. The living room is named after Hava Güleç (1941–2009), a piece-rate worker at Seppelfricke in Gelsenkirchen. Alongside wage labour, she organised everyday life, cared for the family, offered advice and healed in the neighbourhood. Her knowledge was a form of care that sustained the community without drawing attention to itself. Renaming former churches shifts both their function and what they represent: in place of sacred representation, a space of intimacy, care and togetherness – centring the private and the often invisible.

Christ-König, Bochum

**Presented by Creative Mediators:
Krzysztof Kościuczuk & Anda Rottenberg**

**Participants:
Mirosław Bałka, Mehtap Baydu, Mabe
Bethônico, Aline Bouvy, Cudelice Brazelton
IV, Bérénice Gaça Courtin, Niklas Goldbach,
Nicolas Groszpiere, Albe Hamiti, Eva Kořátková,
Katarzyna Kozyra, Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Anka
Sasnal, Wilhelm Sasnal, Luc Tuymans**

Designed by Düsseldorf architect Franz Schneider, the church was built in 1932 and almost entirely destroyed by an aerial mine in November 1944. Rebuilt between 1946 and 1957, the church's interior has retained the monumental character of the original design: its high, imposing forms have drawn comparisons to authoritarian architecture. Christ-König carries this weight visibly in its proportions and atmosphere. The works presented here respond to the histories embedded in the building and its social and historical context. Inspired by the

resonance between the church's architecture – with its echoes of Italian fascism – and the region's industrial ties during the National Socialist period, the artists presented here approach questions of memory, complicity and erasure. In recent years, Christ-König's pastor, Father Ludwig, began transforming the church into a cultural space, an ongoing process initiated to keep the building open and give it new purpose within the community. A space in transition, it carries its past visibly – and remains open to what it might yet become.

St. Anna, Bochum

**Presented by Creative Mediators:
Krzysztof Kościuczuk & Anda Rottenberg**

**Participants:
Pedro Cabrita Reis, Kateryna Lysovenko,
Pinar Öğrenci, Mykola Ridnyi, Wilhelm Sasnal,
Marion Stokes**

The church sits in the heart of Bochum's Goldhamme district, a neighbourhood shaped by generations of steel workers and their families. Built in 1929 and consecrated in 1934, it was designed as more than a place of worship. Like many churches of its kind across the Ruhr Area, it was a neighbourhood anchor, a gathering point for a community whose daily life was defined by industrial labour. St. Anna has been altered many times – damaged in the Second World War, rebuilt, renovated and adapted to changing needs. It remains a consecrated space, but one that has opened up:

today it is shared by many, from Schauspielhaus Bochum and a local amateur theatre group to a recent sound exhibition and, at times, a choir. The work gathered here engages with this open, shared space and with the region's histories of industry, mining and labour. It draws out the often invisible lives of the labour migrants who sustained the Ruhr area, alongside questions of rights, dignity and belonging – and, in dialogue with the building itself, asks what such a space can become as it opens beyond its original purpose.

Gethsemane-Kirche, Bochum

Presented by Creative Mediators:
Krzysztof Kościuczuk & Anda Rottenberg

Participants:
Mirosław Bałka, Mehtap Baydu, Zuza Golińska,
Miedya Mahmood, Marina Naprushkina, Julia
Nitschke, Mikołaj Sobczak, Cassidy Toner

Gethsemane Church was built in 1949–50 by members of the local Protestant community, on the foundations of a parish hall destroyed in the Second World War. It was never meant to be a grand building. It was one of many *Notkirchen* – emergency churches – designed by architect Otto Bartning as part of a Protestant relief programme after the war: so many churches had been lost and so many refugees had arrived that new places of worship were needed in large numbers. Like many post-war churches across the Ruhr Area, it was built quickly and modestly – from salvaged brick and prefabricated timber – for a developing neighbourhood of industrial workers and their families. In German, these are called *Pantoffelkirchen* – slipper churches – because you could reach them in your slippers.

The works here take the church's history seriously: the labour and migration that shaped this region, the meaning of home and belonging, and what endures when the structures that held communities together begin to change. Gethsemane was listed as a historic monument in 1994. But like many of its kind, it now faces the question of what comes next. Declining congregations and rising costs have left dozens of these churches without a clear future. Some have been demolished, others radically reimaged. It remains in use by the local Protestant community while becoming a space for new kinds of gathering. It has not yet decided what it will become – and that openness is itself a kind of invitation.

St. Ludgerus, Bochum

Presented by Creative Mediator:
Josep Bohigas

Participants:
CaboSanRoque, Curro Claret

St. Ludgerus embodies the logic of the Pantoffelkirche: a church conceived to serve the immediate neighbourhood, embedded in everyday life and understood as a domestic extension of the community. Today, that proximity remains, but its function has collapsed. This project does not attempt to restore its function, but to draw out its tension. In collaboration with the Catalan collective Cabosanroque, the church is transformed into a counterintuitive stadium: a space where the rules of competition are suspended and rewritten.

Here, play replaces ritual. Sports structures – goals, hoops, markings – activate the space as a field of action. There are no spectators. Outcomes become irrelevant. Success is silenced; error is amplified. This transformation

incorporates a material and collective dimension. Together with Curro Claret, a stand is constructed from recycled church pews altered through workshops with local residents. Elements originally designed for obedience are reorganised as an infrastructure for gathering, exposure and friction.

Sound structures the experience. Each action activates the organ, turning the building into a collective instrument. What was once a centralised voice is fragmented into a multiplicity of voices. The church ceases to be a place of belief, but it does not stabilise as a new facility. It becomes an open space, where community does not already exist, but is produced – through conflict, uncertainty and continuous negotiation.