Mesh

Festival of
Arts and Technology

October 14–18
2026

Freilager-Platz
Münchenstein/Basel

Mesh Festival 2026
Urban Actions | Spatial Utopias
— Infrastructures of Care

October 14-18, 2026, Freilager-Platz Basel

Inhabited landscapes evolve through the interplay of technology, infrastructure, and lived experience. Digital systems permeate spaces, decisions, and relationships; they shape what becomes visible, what appears possible, and how people encounter one another under contemporary conditions. *Urban Actions | Spatial Utopias* does not merely observe these shifts, but understands them as open, negotiable terrains in which collective futures are continually reimagined. When technologies intervene in urban structures, social relations shift as well: proximity takes shape differently, distance changes, and forms of commitment are reorganised. Some modes of togetherness intensify, others disappear.

From this position, the curatorial concept *Infrastructures of Care* takes shape. *Care* is not an abstract idea here, but a formative principle: the paths we take, the systems that connect us, the places we share, the resources we protect. *Care* describes the conditions under which public spaces remain resilient, accessible, and alive. For the festival, the *Circle of Care* emerges — a configuration of five interconnected fields of practice that illuminate the complex and multilayered networks of urban transformation from different perspectives.

Commons of Connection

What does proximity mean when encounters increasingly take place on screens? For many younger generations, everyday life shifts into spaces where physical togetherness scarcely occurs — with consequences ranging from cyberbullying to the loss of shared spaces for play and learning. At the same time, older people lose the meeting places that once sustained exchange, participation, and a sense of connectedness. Where such forms of proximity erode, othering intensifies: the tendency to assume responsibility only for those who appear familiar — a mechanism that post-democratic actors increasingly exploit on a global scale. *Commons of Connection* searches for infrastructures that counter this development: encounters that are physically felt and socially embedded; spaces that deepen relationships; systems that enable solidarity beyond the boundaries of belonging.

Wild Cities

The festival explores urban living environments as ecological assemblages. It addresses the coexistence of human and non-human needs, and asks how technical systems, natural processes, and urban dynamics can be thought together. At its centre are resistant,

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multilayered ecologies that understand urban structures not as static systems, but as dynamic, living, and relational formations.

Memory Machines

As physical spaces disappear and archives migrate into the digital, modes of remembering begin to shift. Dominant search engines, large-language-model AI systems, and curated knowledge platforms determine which forms of knowledge remain visible — and which quietly fade from view. Time and spaces are lacking to store and transmit local legends and folktales, as well as craft-based knowledge and regional traditions. *Memory Machines* examines how such stories can be preserved, shared, and made experientially present again: through speculative forms of monument-making, collective storytelling practices, and poetic knowledge infrastructures that do not exclude diversity, but bring it back into the present.

Future Playgrounds

This field of practice addresses children, young people, and adults and understands participation as a practice shared across generations. It makes clear that the decisions of today's adults shape the living environments of the future and underscores the importance of involving children and young people in these processes of shaping. *Future Playgrounds* creates environments for experimentation, learning, and co-creation — places where people of all ages explore technologies, build models, and imagine their own ways of living together. It's where generations meet to collectively explore which forms of cohabitation can sustain the future.

Circular Systems

Everyday infrastructures can be designed to prioritise continuity and renewal rather than speed and short-term consumption driven to exhaustion. They strengthen cycles, return resources, and enable forms of durability that incorporate change. Instead of equipping anonymous systems with ever-new technologies, infrastructures can provide orientation and carry long-term responsibility. Our living environments are embedded in ecological and technological infrastructures — from planetary interdependencies to orbital systems in which satellites and networks govern everyday processes. Together, these levels form an interwoven configuration that can be grounded in responsibility rather than extraction, enabling care, adaptation, and continual renewal.

Mesh
Festival für Kunst und Technologie
Freilager-Platz 3
4142 Münchenstein
hello@meshfestival.ch

Press + Media
media@meshfestival.ch