IMAGINE PEACE

Co-funded by the European Union

In the city of the Nobel Peace Prize, European artists invite the public to imagine peace

The Creative Europe project IMAGINE PEACE reaches its final festival stop of 2026 in Oslo, bringing together light art, international collaboration and reflections on peace from across Europe. The artistic journey will conclude in Copenhagen in early 2027.

Every December, Oslo becomes the focus of international attention as the Nobel Peace Prize honours those who have made outstanding contributions to peace. This November, the Norwegian capital will explore peace from a different perspective: through art, light and collective imagination.

From 5 to 8 November 2026, the European cooperation project IMAGINE PEACE will take centre stage at Fjord Oslo, transforming the city's waterfront into an open-air exhibition. International artists will invite visitors to reflect on what peace means today – and how it can be imagined, nurtured and built together.

Supported by the European Union's Creative Europe programme, IMAGINE PEACE connects five European light festivals: Copenhagen Light Festival in Denmark, Essen Light Festival in Germany, Water Light Festival in Brixen, Italy, Visualia Festival of Light in Pula, Croatia, and Fjord Oslo in Norway.

Following presentations across the European partner festival network, Oslo marks the final festival stop of 2026. The project will continue its artistic journey in early 2027, when Copenhagen Light Festival will host the concluding presentation of IMAGINE PEACE, bringing the European collaboration fill circle.

Where the idea of peace meets artistic expression

The connection between Oslo and the project's central theme is more than symbolic. One of the installations, *FRACTIONS* by German artist Claudia Reh, will be presented at the Nobel Peace Center, a place dedicated to dialogue about peace, conflict and human rights.

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Inspired by the Japanese art of Kintsugi, in which broken ceramics are repaired while making their cracks visible, *FRACTIONS* explores the fragility of peace and the possibility of rebuilding what has been broken. Using analogue overhead projectors, Reh creates an evolving mosaic of light that incorporates visual contributions from audiences in different European cities.

These individual reflections travel with the artwork, adding new layers and perspectives at each presentation. Like peace itself, the installation is never truly complete.

While the Nobel Peace Prize recognises outstanding contributions to peace, IMAGINE PEACE approaches the subject through artistic expression and public participation. Rather than offering ready-made answers, the project encourages people to explore their own understanding of peace and their relationship with others.

Different artistic voices, a shared vision

The artworks presented at Fjord Oslo approach peace from different cultural, historical and personal perspectives.

In *VOICE OF UKRAINE*, Ukrainian artist Julia Shamsheieva draws on traditional mythology and symbolism to express the resilience of the Ukrainian people. Combining light, animation and music, the installation explores themes of memory, loss, protection and hope.

Croatian artist Petar Šćulac examines the lasting traces of conflict in *STAIRS BETWEEN WARS*. His sculptures, transformed by projected light and shadow, reveal how memories of war remain present even as societies move towards peace.

Other works focus on the relationship between individuals and their communities. In *IDENTITY*, Italian artist Alessandro Lupi uses a suspended mirrored sculpture to question the role of the ego in creating division and to encourage reflection on coexistence and shared responsibility.

WALKING TOWARDS PEACE by Danish artist Eva Esmann Behrens explores the simple act of walking as a metaphor for peace: not a destination we eventually reach, but a continuous journey shaped by our past and the steps we take together.

A new commission by Oslo-based studio Void adds another perspective. *NADIR*, an inverted pyramid illuminated by shifting patterns of light, challenges familiar symbols of power while evoking the warmth of a campfire – a place of gathering, hospitality and human connection.

Building peace together

Public participation is an essential dimension of IMAGINE PEACE. The project seeks to create opportunities for dialogue, allowing visitors to become active contributors rather than passive spectators.

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Alongside *FRACTIONS*, another example is *PALLETS* by Croatian collective Visualia Studio. The installation brings together words and reflections on peace collected from people of different ages, backgrounds and countries. Projected onto a temporary structure made from ordinary wooden pallets, these individual voices form a collective portrait of how peace is understood and imagined across communities.

The work also reflects the project's commitment to sustainability. Constructed with locally borrowed and reused materials, it demonstrates how artistic creation can encourage both collective responsibility and a more conscious use of resources.

Together, these installations reveal a central idea behind IMAGINE PEACE: peace is not simply the absence of conflict, but an ongoing process that requires dialogue, empathy, participation and a willingness to imagine different possibilities.

Five festivals, one European dialogue

Beyond the individual artworks, IMAGINE PEACE represents a collaborative effort to connect cultural organisations, artists and audiences across national borders.

The project brings together five established European light festivals, each contributing its own artistic identity and relationship with its local community:

- Copenhagen Light Festival – Copenhagen, Denmark
- Essen Light Festival – Essen, Germany
- Water Light Festival – Brixen/Bressanone, Italy
- Visualia Festival of Light – Pula, Croatia
- Fjord Oslo – Oslo, Norway

Through a shared artistic programme, international exchange and public engagement, the partner festivals explore how light art can encourage dialogue about peace while strengthening cultural cooperation across Europe.

Sustainability is another key pillar of the project. The festival organisers collaborate with the University of Innsbruck (Austria) and Eurac Research (Italy) to develop and assess more environmentally conscious approaches to festival organisation.

Their joint work includes sustainability assessments addressing the environmental, social and economic dimensions of light festivals, providing a foundation for more responsible event planning and the exchange of good practices between the partner organisations.

By combining artistic experimentation with international cooperation and sustainability research, IMAGINE PEACE aims to create an impact that extends beyond the individual festival editions.

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From Oslo to Copenhagen: The European journey continues

The fifth edition of Fjord Oslo provides a particularly meaningful setting for the final festival presentation of IMAGINE PEACE in 2026. From 5 to 8 November, ten light artworks by artists from eight countries will transform the Norwegian capital's Harbour Promenade into an accessible outdoor exhibition.

Presented in public spaces across Tjuvholmen, Aker Brygge, Rådhusplassen and Akershusstranda, the festival is free to attend, making contemporary light art accessible to residents and visitors alike.

Yet the European journey is not over. From 29 January to 21 February 2027, Copenhagen Light Festival will host the concluding presentation of IMAGINE PEACE, bringing together the experiences, artistic perspectives and reflections developed throughout the international collaboration.

In a city internationally associated with the Nobel Peace Prize, the Oslo presentation offers a particularly meaningful moment to reflect on the project's central question: what does peace mean to us, and how can we contribute to creating it?

The conversation will continue in Copenhagen, carrying forward the ideas and connections fostered across the five European light festivals.

Because peace, like the artworks that seek to express it, is never finished. It is something we must continue to imagine and create together.

About IMAGINE PEACE

IMAGINE PEACE is a European cooperation project co-funded by the European Union through the Creative Europe programme. The project connects five light festivals in Denmark, Germany, Italy, Croatia and Norway, fostering international artistic collaboration, cultural exchange, public participation and sustainable festival practices.

Its mission is to celebrate Europe's cultural diversity while exploring peace as a shared responsibility and encouraging more environmentally conscious approaches to cultural events.

The project is supported by two scientific partners: the University of Innsbruck (Austria) and Eurac Research (Italy), contributing research and expertise on sustainable festival practices.

The European festival programme will conclude at Copenhagen Light Festival, taking place from 29 January to 21 February 2027.

More information: www.imaginepeaceproject.eu

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Fjord Oslo 2026 – Practical information

Dates: 5–8 November 2026

Opening hours: 6 pm–11 pm daily

Locations: Tjuvholmen, Aker Brygge, Rådhusplassen and Akershusstranda, Oslo

Admission: Free

Festival programme: www.fjordoslo.com

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