

AND SO WE
PLAY

COUNTERPLAY
7 - 9 MAY 2026

08:30 - 09:30

Arrival and Live Music.

Room 0.6

Get settled and listen to a local duo playing tunes by The Beatles.

/Let It Beat

09:30 - 10:30

Welcome to CounterPlay!

Room 0.6

Play All Day

Live Music.

Room 0.6

All are welcome to join in or sing along!

/Anthroplayology

Duplo.

Room 0.6

A DUPLO playground 'training' area.

/WhatBox

Monster Garden Oracle Card Group Readings.

Room 0.6 - Itinerant

Group card divination sessions.

/Zack Wood

Mischievous Tasks.

Room 0.6

Add your own or pick out a mischievous task and complete it in secret before the end of the festival.

/Ant Moy

Food For Thought.

Room 0.6

A participatory, conversation-based play format that invites people to engage with complex topics with simple, tactile interactions.

/Alexandra Wieck

The Solarpunk City Of The Future.

Room 0.6

By setting up a solar powered "city," complete with power distribution and a little train, people create something - a sculpture, or building, practical or abstract, that they want to see in a sustainable, just future.

/Amos Blanton

10:30 - 12:00

Wish You Were Here.

Room 1.56

In this session, build the world of the magpie post, pondering how the postcards we send via the magpie post allow for connection, secrets, layered meaning, and at times, anonymity. Write, receive and share playful postcards.

/Dr Lynn H.C. Love

Body Word Play.

Room 2.57

Join a participatory, embodied play session that invites people to explore the felt experience of play through movement, language, and collective creation. Blending poetry, somatic practices, and playful prompts.

/Sarah Huxley

The Power of Play Rituals.

Room 0.21

Humans have always played with rituals. Somehow, many of them have faded in modern life. In this workshop, we explore how play rituals can help us slow down, pay attention, and connect more deeply with ourselves and each other.

/Moe Miyahara
/Pauliina Kittilä

This Is Not A Planning Workshop: A Choose-Your-Own Playful Adventure In Space and Mobility.

Room 2.22

Participants move through a series of playful prompts that guide them to notice space, movement, rules and encounters differently.

/Petra Stocker

12:00 - 13:00

Lunch and Live Music.

Room 0.6

Have food and listen to a local duo playing tunes by The Beatles.

/Let It Beat

13:00 - 14:30

Play as a Strategic Intervention for Burnout In Helping Professions.

Room 1.56

Workers in public-facing helping professions have long been considered at risk for burnout, and this risk has risen even higher during and post-pandemic. In this session, we will explore play as an intervention and possible antidote to the looming risk of burnout, with a particular awareness towards healthcare workers and educators, but everyone is welcome.

/Rachel Haley Himmelheber

Playing Around Corners.

Room 2.22

Join in exploring how play might happen around, in, over and through the corners that shape our spaces and our lives. Together, we'll celebrate the liminal, welcome the unknown, and craft tiny acts of play that transform the ordinary into the delightfully strange.

/Maria Saridaki
/Robb Mitchell

After the Growth Game: Playing with Rules.

Room 2.57

In the game of life we make choices based on the rules we're given. But what happens when those rules change midway through? Through interactive games, we explore shifting systems, and what it feels like when fairness, value, and success are redefined.

/Kevin Davidson

14:30 - 15:00

Coffee Break.

15:00 - 16:30

Stories For A New World.

Room 2.54

The aim is to create conditions where the intangible can emerge through telling stories, increasing their impact and our collective capacity to hold this space throughout CounterPlay.

/Angela Halvorsen Bogo

The Environmental Citizen's Playbook.

Room 1.56

The Environmental Citizen's Playbook is a participatory workshop exploring how play and playfulness can support emotionally sustainable engagement with environmental action.

/Savannah Vize

Radical Hope through Rapid Toy Making.

Room 2.22

This workshop invites an exploration of radical hope through playful, hands-on toy making using simple, recycled materials such as old newspapers and masking tape.

/Katriina Heljakka
/Jesper Falck Legaard
/Marjaana Kangas

DemocraZy.

Room 2.57

DemocraZy is embracing 'not knowing', exploring the world together and how we want to live in it, together. Let's play democracy, with a little craziness!

/Marian van Voorn

16:45 - 17:15

Performance Lecture: What Gets In The Way Of Play?

Room 0.6

Meet Holly's inner cast of characters; there's Patricia, Holly's inner academic, Del, Holly's inner critic and a huge selection of other parts who might turn up to explore our theme: what gets in the way of play?

/Holly Stoppit

15:00 - 16:30

The Art Of Wonder.

Room 2.22

A workshop through 5 different aspects of the state of Wonder: Noticing, Curiosity, Surprise, Abundance and Gratitude.

/Robbie Foulston

Time Travelling with Trees.

Room 0.21

A session to play with temporalities and imaginative possibilities. More than anything, this is an invitation to create stories where deep roots and symbiotic relationships play a fundamental role.

/Alisdair Gurling
/Isa Brandalise
/Lisa Grocott
/Shanti Sumartojo

Full Stop.

Room 2.57

'Play' is often associated with high-energy active, physical activity and can unintentionally privilege able-bodied players, but how do we play when ill, infirm, tired, overwhelmed or otherwise?

/Malcolm Hamilton

In The Layers Of Our Drawing.

Room 1.56

A collaborative drawology session where participants rotate around a table, layering drawings in response to changing prompts.

/Dasha Moschonas

18:45 and on...

Festival Dinner and Live Music.

Canteen

Enjoy the night and listen to fun latin grooves.

/Gringo Cumbia



08:30 - 09:30

Arrival.

Room 0.6



09:30 - 10:30

When Was Your Last Health Checkup?

Room 0.6

A participatory session that rethinks what it means to be "well", and what might be missing through unexpected forms of assessment.

/Edmund Zhang
/Tanaya Desai

10:30 - 12:00

Peaceful Play.

Room 2.57

A way to reconnect and ground, to make space and set the scene for rest and reoperation, and reset to a more natural pace. With gentleness and compassion.

/Ruth Baxter Hesseldal

What Gets In The Way Of Play?

Room 2.53

This workshop will offer a creative exploration of the parts that pop up when we play. By "Parts," I mean our inner voices, i.e. the inner critic, the inner perfectionist, the inner child, the inner cool cat, etc. Drawing on Internal Family Systems (IFS), dramatherapy and play, we'll be exploring: how do our parts hinder our play? And how might getting to know our parts bring more play?

/Holly Stoppit

The Debriefing Cube:
When Play Sparks Change.

Room 1.56

Together, we'll uncover how structured reflection transforms ephemeral play into durable learning. The session invites shared authorship, where participants co-create meaning rather than waiting for an "expert's answers".

/Julian Kea

A Seriously Silly Session.

Room 1.53

Silliness is an aspect of play often put in opposition to the 'serious business of learning'. But, what if it's actually a shortcut to accessing the space within ourselves that allows the risk taking, freedom, and playfulness necessary to learn?

/Helen Stonelake

12:00 - 13:00

Lunch.

Room 0.6

13:00 - 14:30

Come Play with New Roles, Realities And Relationships In This Roleplaying Session.

Room 2.53

Play a Nordic-style tabletop roleplaying game, take on a character, and co-create a story with others, then explore how these games can engage with complex themes and creative practice.

/Esben Wilstrup

The Award Ceremony.

Room 2.57

The Award Ceremony is a workshop offered at a world changing scale. It draws on improvisation, comedy, making/craft, strategic foresight and backcasting. It playfully enables community participants to set goals for designers and decision makers that have real social impact and to develop strategies to achieve them.

/Malcolm Hamilton

Urban Play Crawl.

Room 0.6

Is Kolding built for play? It's time for the play specialist to find out. In the Urban Play Crawl we'll leave the walls of the Design School and as an expedition of explorers we'll try our playful spirits against the urban fabric.

/Natalia Gajo

Design 4 Play: Intergenerational Dialogue Through Material Traces Of Childhood.

Room 2.22

This participatory engagement uses childhood memories and memorabilia and play as mediating elements to invite compassionate, intergenerational exchange, with a focus on children's eudaemonia. Grounded in research-through-design, it reimagines "site" as a space where memory, materiality, and shared meaning come together through playful reflection and inquiry.

/Ari Pugh



14:30 - 15:00

Coffee Break.

15:00 - 16:30

Higher Education: Is It A Game? Is It Play? Or Something Else?

Room 2.53

In this creative workshop we'll look through three giant lenses at various aspects of adult education and decide if they are more game-like, more play-like, or something else entirely. And whether putting them through a different lens would produce a better outcome for those involved.

/Alex Moseley

Let's Play Cards.

Room 2.57

Participants will have the opportunity to play with card games and then be taken through a simple introduction to turn any session into a card game from a single flash card to a sophisticated deck building game.

/Roger Saunders

Unwinnable Games, Decolonial Joy and Other Ways to Flex the Trust Muscle.

Room 1.53

Explore unwinnable games as a playful, decolonial practice that challenges competition and invites new ways of relating. Through collaborative play and reflection, participants experience how uncertainty, trust, and shared storytelling can open space for connection, creativity, and decolonial joy.

/Anthea Moys

17:15 - 18:45

Stag And Hen.

Room 0.6

A playful and chaotic take on the British stag and hen party tradition, this session invites participants to experience anglo depravity through humorous group challenges. Split into Hens and Stags, players complete bingo-style tasks around the city, interacting with strangers, embracing silliness, and bonding through shared mischief before regrouping to celebrate and wap stories.

/Fi Nicholson
/Gab Drewet

The Playful Mocktail Competition.

Room 0.21

Playful Mocktail is a collective, playful team activity disguised as a cocktail challenge. Participants gather in small, temporary teams to create an "Instagrammable" cocktail, but the drink itself is not the point. What matters is what happens in between. The hesitations, the listening, the misread cues, the awkward questions, the moments of delight and disappointment.

/Ed Gonsalves

The Playful Of The Oppressed.

Room 0.6

Our call investigates the potential and bottlenecks of recapturing play from external and internal oppression. Join a workshop in a format inspired by forum/improv theatre where we investigate the oppression of playfulness in the modern adult world of work or relationship.

/Jesper Lind Olsen
/Elin Fredrikson

Save the Frogs and What the Face!?

Room 1.56

An invitation to come and play: rescuing frogs from what lurks beneath the surface, speaking a language you didn't know you knew, and matching and stealing silly faces.

/Stupid Studio

18:45 and on...

Dinner.

Canteen

Disco Ceilidh.

Canteen

On Friday 8th May it will be David Attenborough's 100th birthday and Kevin Davidson brings a special version of his Disco Ceilidh to celebrate this. It's of course very playful with dances which connect with the ore-than-human world.

/Kevin Davidson





08:30 - 09:30

Arrival.

Room 0.6



09:30 - 10:30

Shared Beginning.

Room 0.6

10:30 - 12:00

Game of Universal Quest.

Room 1.56

Join Portia Tung The Play Alchemist on an exciting embodied adventure across time and space where we explore the power, purpose and place of play in human evolution, as well as in our individual modern lives, culminating in an emergent map of our collective play future and a roadmap of how we can get there together. For ourselves and greater good.

/Portia Tung

The Queen and Her Fool.

Room 1.53

Building on tools developed through The Festival of the Fool; gentle invitation, shared attention, and playful listening, We will explore how public space responds when approached with care. The magic unfolds in relationship with the environment, passers-by, and the moment itself - allowing play to arise from presence, rather than performance. May include songs, stories, poetry, costumes and time travel.

*/Angela Halvorsen Bogo
/Robbie Foulston*

“Can I Roll For Friendship?”: Using Co-Created Roleplaying Events to Create a Sense of Community and Social Bonds.

Room 2.57

An interactive exhibition of a co-created roleplaying system exploring community and social bonds. Players join short sessions to create characters, embark on quests, and shape a shared evolving story. Actions taken in both a physical map and online space influence future gameplay, building a continuously changing narrative across participants.

/Alice Casagrande Moretti

Why You Should Start A Play Club?

Room 2.54

We talk about practising play – yet in our everyday culture it's difficult to treat it as a priority. What if we were treating play as an intentional and regular community practice? During this session I'll tell about my experiences of organizing a Play Club in Copenhagen and share tips on how one can organize their own play club. I'll encourage participants to imagine what kind of play community would they like to be a part of and what would it take to start one?

/Natalia Gajo

12:00 - 13:00

Lunch.

Room 0.6



13:00 - 14:30

Sculpt About It: A Game For Discussing Very Important Questions In Very Silly Ways.

Room 2.22

What has been your favourite part of CounterPlay so far? Can you express it in a sculpture? What about in two minutes, with your hands behind your back? This session invites players to reflect upon and share their experiences of the CounterPlay Festival using plasticine.

/Kai Durkin

“What If...”

Room 0.21

What If is a playful, open space where participants explore ideas through making, movement, and collaboration. Inspired by how children play, the session invites people to experiment, connect, and create together using prompts and shared materials. The focus is on joy, discovery, and collective creativity, with participants free to join, leave, and document their evolving artistic journeys.

/Kathy Williams

14:30 - 15:00

Coffee Break.

15:00 - 16:30

CounterPlay World Café.

Room 2.57

To catch our collective breath and gather our impressions, thoughts and dreams, we invite you to join this 'world cafe' inspired session, where we can start to shape future play initiatives.



16.30 - 17.15

Spilscape.

Room 0.6

CounterPlay Spilscape is an open-ended, experimental DIY printmaking workshop repurposing poly-plastic foam as a stamping medium. Participants translate a shared theme into individual responses by creating simple hand-cut stamps. Through repetition, variation, and placement, the printed marks accumulate into a shared visual field that reflects multiple points of view.

/Alessa Petzer

Rebelebration.

Room 0.6

Take part in the first ever Counterplay Rebelebration – a rebellious celebration; a protest for playfulness; a joyful walk around in which we march, sing, dance, pull silly faces, wave our hands and remind the world and ourselves why this thing we call play is so important! Over the course of the conference you'll be invited to reflect, respond and make signs and placards, which we'll then use as we close out the conference on Saturday afternoon with our parade of playfulness

/Dan Castro



18:45 and on...

Outdoor Dinner.

Klimapavillonon

