

Open Call

Shopyard Summer School

18 – 25 jul

english version

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Why this open call?

In the centre of Braga, a city in northern Portugal, many shopping centres built during the 1980s and 1990s are now underused—despite their prime urban locations. A large number of retail units in these centres currently stand vacant.

In 2025, as Braga holds the title of **Portuguese Capital of Culture**, the **Shopyard** project—curated by **Space Transcribers**—proposes a renewed focus on these overlooked urban spaces, fostering public dialogue about their future through experimentation, critical reflection, and cultural engagement.

Among the various initiatives within the programme is an international **Summer School** for students of architecture and related disciplines, organised in partnership by **Space Transcribers** and **INSTITUTO**.

Guided by invited specialist mentors and through a hands-on, immersive methodology, participants selected via this open call will explore the challenges facing Braga's first-generation shopping centres and develop spatial strategies that rethink ownership, collective use, and the potential for new forms of work, commerce, and occupation.

This document outlines all the necessary information and guidelines for applying to the Shopyard Summer School.

Applications to the Shopyard Summer School are open from **14 April to 13 May 2025** at the following link:

→ <https://forms.gle/A1c5iBRRgR5AM2MU8>

What is the Braga 25 initiative?

Braga 25 – Portuguese Capital of Culture is a national initiative launched by the Ministry of Culture of Portugal following the selection process for the 2027 European Capital of Culture (ECoC 2027). Braga, along with the Portuguese cities of Aveiro, Évora, and Ponta Delgada, was among the four finalists. Ultimately, Évora was chosen to represent Portugal as the ECoC in 2027.

Recognising the quality of work developed by all finalist cities, the Portuguese Ministry of Culture established a new national initiative: the Portuguese Capital of Culture. The first cities to receive this title are precisely the finalist cities that were not selected: Aveiro (2024), Braga (2025), and Ponta Delgada (2026).

Braga 25 is a year-long cultural initiative taking place throughout 2025, across various locations in the municipality of Braga. During this year, the city will be the national hub for cultural activities, highlighting the best artistic practices in Portugal, involving citizens in participatory artistic processes, strengthening the local arts and culture sector, and maintaining the European cultural connections built during the ECoC bid.

What is the Shopyard project?

In the heart of Braga, a historic city in northern Portugal, lie more than **25 shopping centres** built during the 1980s and 1990s. Despite their central and strategic locations, these buildings have become outdated and are in need of reimagining. The rise of large retail parks on the outskirts of the city, shifting consumer habits, and successive economic crises have left many units in these first-generation centres vacant.

Although they no longer possess the vibrancy of their early years, these underutilised spaces present opportunities to foster new cultural and spatial dynamics within the city. The Shopyard project—curated by Space Transcribers and integrated into the Braga 25 – Portuguese Capital of Culture programme—emerged as a response to this context.

The project is structured around two core axes: reflection and creation. The reflection axis, initiated in 2024, includes guided tours, public assemblies, and this Summer School, bringing together experts, artists, and the local community to explore the role of these spaces in contemporary urban life.

The creation axis centres on the **transformation of shop no. 33 in Shopping Santa Cruz** into a space for creativity and community, designed by the Porto-based architecture studio **OITOO**. This hub is hosting short-term artistic residencies and workshops throughout 2025.

Both axes will culminate in a final exhibition in November 2025, occupying several first-generation shopping centres in Braga and temporarily transforming them through artistic and critical interventions.

For more information, visit: www.shopyard.pt

What is the Shopyard Summer School?

The Shopyard Summer School is a one-week intensive, educational, and experimental programme focused on the reactivation of first-generation shopping centres in Braga. It forms part of Braga 25 – Portuguese Capital of Culture and is co-organised by Space Transcribers and INSTITUTO.

Thirty participants (30), selected through this open call, will be divided into three working groups, each led by a specialised architect/mentor: **OITOO (Porto)**, **BUREAU (Lisbon/ Geneva)**, and **OUEST (Brussels)**. Each group will work on one of the selected case studies: **Shopping Santa Cruz, Galécia Shopping Centre, and Santa Bárbara Shopping Centre**.

The outputs may include architectural proposals, temporary installations, participatory workshops, and experimental activities that engage with the social and commercial dynamics of these spaces.

The programme also features a series of public events, including **lectures, guided tours, film screenings, assemblies, and more**.

Objectives of the Shopyard Summer School

- To develop creative architectural proposals aimed at reactivating Braga's first-generation shopping centres, rethinking collective use and urban occupation.
- To implement these ideas through temporary interventions within the shopping centres, actively engaging local communities.
- To foster collaborative creation and critical thinking in an immersive environment guided by expert mentors.
- To publicly present the outcomes in a final exhibition and contribute to the broader Shopyard exhibition in November 2025.

Organisation

→ **Space Transcribers** is an architectural research practice founded in Braga in 2015 by Fernando P. Ferreira and Daniel Duarte Pereira. With an immersive and collaborative approach, their work explores innovative forms of mediation between the built environment, communities, and ecosystems—blurring the boundaries between art and architecture. They were part of the Portuguese representation at the 18th Venice Architecture Biennale in 2023, under the Fertile Futures programme. Space Transcribers currently curate three research projects for Braga 25: Contra-Quiosque, Shopyard, and Forma da Vizinhaça. www.spacetranscribers.com

→ **INSTITUTO** is an independent cultural space founded in Porto in 2018, dedicated to promoting interdisciplinary artistic practices. Its programme includes lectures, exhibitions, workshops, and residencies, with a strong focus on contemporary social and political issues. The space is led by architect and researcher Paulo Moreira, with project management by Sara Pinheiro and production by Nuno Silva. www.oinstituato.pt

Who can participate?

Applications are open to students and recent graduates who meet the following criteria:

- Students currently enrolled in the 4th or 5th year of a university degree in architecture. Students from related fields—such as visual arts, photography, or design—may also be considered.
- Recent graduates who completed their studies between September 2023 and April 2025.
- Applicants must be no older than 30 years of age by 31 December 2025.
- A total of 30 participants will be selected by the organisers.

What we offer

- Free participation in all Summer School activities, including educational, artistic, and technical guidance from mentors and organisers.
- Accommodation from 18 to 25 July (7 nights) at Espaço Vita (Rua de São Domingos 94B, 4710-435 Braga), in gender-separated dormitories. Bathrooms are shared, with individual privacy ensured.
- A welcome dinner on the first day of the Summer School. Selected meals are included—namely breakfast, lunch/snack lunches, and aperitifs during the public programme.
- Personal accident insurance.
- Certificate of participation issued upon completion of the Summer School.

Expenses not covered by the organisers

- Travel and transport to and from Braga are not included.
- Accommodation before 18 July or after 25 July.
- Meals outside those specified, personal purchases, health insurance, bank fees, and travel documentation.
- Health insurance (the provided insurance covers only personal accidents related to Summer School activities).
- Work materials such as laptops, cameras, and other personal equipment.

Duration and Locations

- The Shopyard Summer School will take place from **18 to 25 July 2025**, in the city of **Braga**, northern Portugal.
- Participant check-in is scheduled for 18 July at 14:30 at the Shopyard headquarters: shop no. 33, ground floor, Shopping Santa Cruz, Braga.
- Daily activities will run from 09:30 to 18:00 across various locations in the city, followed by a public programme starting at 18:30.
- Each working group will be based in a dedicated space within the shopping centre they are studying, allowing participants to work closely with their mentors in direct contact with the context of their case study.
- Participants must inform the organisers in advance in case of any delays.

Mentors

The mentors will guide participants in their research and the development of reuse proposals for the selected shopping centres. Their role involves sharing technical expertise, design methodologies, and critical approaches to spatial transformation. Mentors for the Shopyard Summer School include:

→ **OITOO**: Founded in 2017, OITOO is an architecture studio based in Porto and Lisbon, composed of João Machado, Laura Lupini, Nuno Rodrigues, and Diogo Zenha. The studio specialises in the reuse and reactivation of spaces and territories, working at the intersection of practice, research, and architectural discourse. They are responsible for the transformation of shop no. 33 at Shopping Santa Cruz, the headquarters of the Shopyard project.

<https://oitoo.pt>

→ **BUREAU**: Established in 2012 by Daniel Zamarbide, Carine Pimenta, and Galliane Zamarbide, BUREAU operates between Lisbon and Geneva, exploring the intersections of architecture, research, and cultural practices. Their work ranges from design and architectural projects to editorial and curatorial initiatives. <https://bureau.ac>

→ **OUEST architecture**: Founded in 2009 by Stéphane Damsin and Jan Haerens, OUEST architecture is based in Brussels and focuses on projects at the crossroads of architecture, culture, and society. Their work includes built projects, research programmes, and curatorial initiatives. They are recognised for promoting circular economy and sustainability in urban environments through reuse of construction materials. <https://ouest.be>

Case Studies

The 30 selected participants will be divided into three working groups. Each group will be guided by one of the mentor teams and will focus on one of the following first-generation shopping centres in Braga:

- **Shopping Santa Cruz:** Located in central Braga, directly behind Theatro Circo, one of the city's most iconic cultural venues. This shopping centre includes six floors of retail space and three upper floors of offices, comprising a total of 136 units and 9,900 m² of commercial area. It currently houses the Shopyard headquarters, easily recognisable by its yellow curtain designed by **OITOO**—the studio mentoring the group working at this site.

- **Galécia Shopping Centre:** Situated at Rua Comendador Santos da Cunha, 589, in the parish of Maximinos, Braga. Built in the mid-1980s, the centre is currently marked by a high vacancy rate. It contains 69 shop units across 3,548 m². Facilities include a small auditorium (now closed), and the -1 level is used as rehearsal space for local music bands and independent cultural initiatives. The lower floor was formerly a bingo hall, later converted into a bar. **OUEST** will mentor the group working at this site.

→ **Santa Bárbara Shopping Centre:** Located in the heart of medieval Braga, this centre acts as a pedestrian shortcut connecting several historic streets. Designed by architect Agostinho Ricca in the 1980s, the complex includes both office and residential units. Most of the underground commercial areas are currently closed to the public. The centre comprises approximately 100 units spread across two floors, with a total commercial area of 1,150 m². The group working here will be mentored by **BUREAU**.

How to apply

Applications must be submitted by **13 May 2025** (final deadline) via an online form available on Google Forms at:

→ <https://forms.gle/A1c5iBRRgR5AM2MU8>

→ Applications may be submitted in **Portuguese** and/or **English**.

→ The Summer School will be conducted primarily in **English**, which will serve as the main language of communication during activities and working sessions. A good command of the language is recommended to ensure full engagement and participation in the programme.

Application contents

- Personal details: Full name, nationality, place of residence, date of birth, email address, and phone number.
- Education: Field of study, university, current academic year or graduation date.
- Motivation statement: A text of up to 2,500 characters outlining your motivation to participate in the Summer School, your interest in the proposed theme, and how your experience and artistic vision align with the project.
- Biography: A text of up to 2,500 characters detailing your academic, professional, and artistic background, highlighting relevant education, previous experiences, and other information that demonstrates your preparation and suitability for the programme.
- Digital portfolio links: Links to websites, social media, or other platforms showcasing your work.
- Mentor preference: Indicate your preferred mentors in order (1st to 3rd). Preferences are not guaranteed.
- Portfolio: Up to 3 projects submitted in PDF format (maximum of 10 A4 pages, up to 10 MB), demonstrating originality, technical skills, and aesthetic consistency.
- Consent: Confirmation of consent for the use of your image during Summer School activities.

Number of selected participants

- A total of **30 participants** will be selected to attend the Shopyard Summer School.
- A **waiting list** will also be created. If a selected participant withdraws, alternates will be contacted in the order established by the jury. The organisers will confirm availability via email.

Selection process and jury

The jury is composed of members from **Space Transcribers** (Daniel Pereira, Fernando Ferreira) and **INSTITUTO** (Paulo Moreira, Sara Pinheiro, Nuno Silva).

- Selection will be based on a **holistic assessment** of each application, with the aim of forming a diverse and complementary group that will enrich the workshop dynamic. Key criteria include the quality of the portfolio, the motivation statement, and the content of the biography.
- The jury reserves the right to exclude applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria or are incomplete.

When will the results be announced?

Applicants will be individually notified of the results by **23 May 2025** via the email address provided in the application form.

Selected applicants must **confirm their participation within three (3) working days** of being contacted. Failure to do so may result in the offer being withdrawn and the place allocated to someone on the waiting list.

Key dates and deadlines

The selection process will follow the schedule below:

- Applications open: 10 April 2025
- Deadline for enquiries: 27 April 2025
- Responses to enquiries: by 2 May 2025 (via email)
- Application deadline: 13 May 2025 (23:59 GMT)
- Announcement of selected participants: by 23 May 2025

Use of image and voice

Images and recordings captured during the Shopyard Summer School may be used by the organisers and Braga 25 – Portuguese Capital of Culture for promotional materials, digital publications, social media, and project documentation.

- Consent will be requested through the application form and may be withdrawn at any time.
- Work produced by participants may also be used to promote future editions of the programme and related initiatives.

Data protection

Personal data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). INSTITUTO and Space Transcribers are jointly responsible for data handling, which will be used solely for the purposes of registration and participation in the programme.

Final provisions

- Applicants must ensure that all information provided in the application is accurate and up to date. The discovery of false information will result in exclusion from the selection process.
- If any changes occur after submission (such as contact details, availability, or withdrawal), applicants must inform the organisers as early as possible via email at projetos@oinstituto.pt, so that a replacement may be contacted if necessary.
- Once selected, participants commit to actively participating in all activities of the Shopyard Summer School, adhering to the schedule and following the mentors' guidance. A respectful and collaborative attitude is expected, encouraging the exchange of ideas.
- The organisers reserve the right to adjust the programme and application timeline for logistical, programmatic, or operational reasons. Any relevant changes will be communicated in advance to participants and published on www.shopyard.pt.
- The organisers are committed to ensuring safe, accessible, and comfortable conditions throughout the programme. However, they cannot be held responsible for incidents resulting from inappropriate participant behaviour or from unforeseen circumstances beyond their control.
- Organisational responsibility begins at the time of check-in and ends with the final presentations on 25 July 2025.

- This document must be read, understood, and accepted at the time of application by ticking the confirmation box in the Google Forms application.
- Any matters not covered in this call will be decided by the organisers and the Braga 25 team.

Questions?

During the application period, any enquiries should be sent to projetos@oinstituto.pt with the subject line “Shopyard Summer School”. The deadline for enquiries is 27 April 2025.

- The organisers will respond to all enquiries by 2 May 2025.

Shopyard Summer School

www.shopyard.pt

braga25.pt

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