

The first international conference on Philip K. Dick welcomes all visitors to Dortmund.

Dortmund is located in Germany's Ruhr Region. The region has gone through multiple transformations in the past two centuries: from an agglomeration of smaller villages in the mid-19th century to a center of heavy industry with coal and steel as most important resources, then on to a cultural center investing into the knowledge economy and environment-friendly technologies. Visitors to the region are often surprised how green the area is, and how the face of the Ruhr has changed through the successful conversion of formerly industrial facilities into cultural hotspots.

The "Dortmunder U", a former brewery gone creative center, and "Zeche Zollverein", a former coal mine that today – as part of UNESCO world cultural heritage – houses a center for design as well as a museum, are just two examples of the impressive transformation that started with the International Building Exhibition Emscherpark (1989-1999) and gained the region the title "European Capital of Culture 2010". The Ruhr of today is a laboratory for mapping new strategies of dealing with future challenges: demographic change, climate change, efficient transportation and logistics.

Dortmund, home of the German soccer champion 2011, with two universities and several research institutions, is at the forefront of innovation and structural change. Its cultural scene is vibrant and diverse: the concert hall, established in 2002; the theater, following a participatory model focused on the audience; several museums and parks alongside cafés and bars; regular film- and literature-related events, and the yearly Juicy Beats electronic beats outdoor festival contribute to its character as a fun-loving and open-minded city. In the Nordstadt, multiethnic and multilingual, Dortmund's creative subculture has found its home in the former brownfields, always inviting newcomers to take part in a jam-session or poetry reading.