

# THE GREAT GAME ISTANBUL **kartal\***

A joint initiative of Politecnico di Torino (Italy), AURA İstanbul, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, and UBT College Kosovo — bringing graduate students in architecture, urban design and planning, City and Regional Planning, and Architecture and Spatial Planning to apply *The Great Game* to a live urban case study in Kartal, İstanbul, with the support of Kartal Municipality.

**Workshop language: English**

<b>ON SITE</b> 29 Aug - 8 Sep 2026	<b>COHORT</b> 21 students 9 faculty	<b>GAMEBOARD</b> Kartal District İstanbul	<b>APPLY BY</b> 15 July
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# INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY, STRATEGIC FORESIGHT, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

A joint initiative of **Politecnico di Torino** (Italy), **AURA Istanbul**, **Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University**, and **UBT College Kosovo**. Graduate students in architecture, urban design and planning, City and Regional Planning, and Architecture and Spatial Planning apply *The Great Game* to a real case study in **Kartal, Istanbul**.

The workshop tests a proven international methodology on active urban transformation — producing scenarios grounded in regulation, economy, and governance, with direct relevance for the city and its institutions.

## 01 · THE GREAT GAME

Hands-on training in negotiation, strategy, and design agency on a live urban gameboard.

## 02 · INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

Intensive collaboration across Politecnico di Torino, AURA Istanbul, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, and UBT College Kosovo.

## 03 · PROFESSIONAL EXPOSURE

Direct contact with practitioners, stakeholders, and institutions shaping Istanbul and Kartal.

**Can that competence be taught? The Great Game says yes: participants define strategies, align actors, and learn how concepts become implementable through institutional and economic dynamics.**

Design is collective and political, yet studios often teach the architect as lone author. In practice, ideas must be negotiated with politicians, experts, investors, and communities — adapted and legitimised by those who shape space.

Tested over **five years** on gameboards in **Detroit, Stazzema, Kiruna, and Belgrade**; a **finalist for the EAAE Pedagogy Awards 2024**.

### TESTED OVER

**5 years**

### GAMEBOARDS

Detroit · Stazzema  
Kiruna · Belgrade

### RECOGNITION

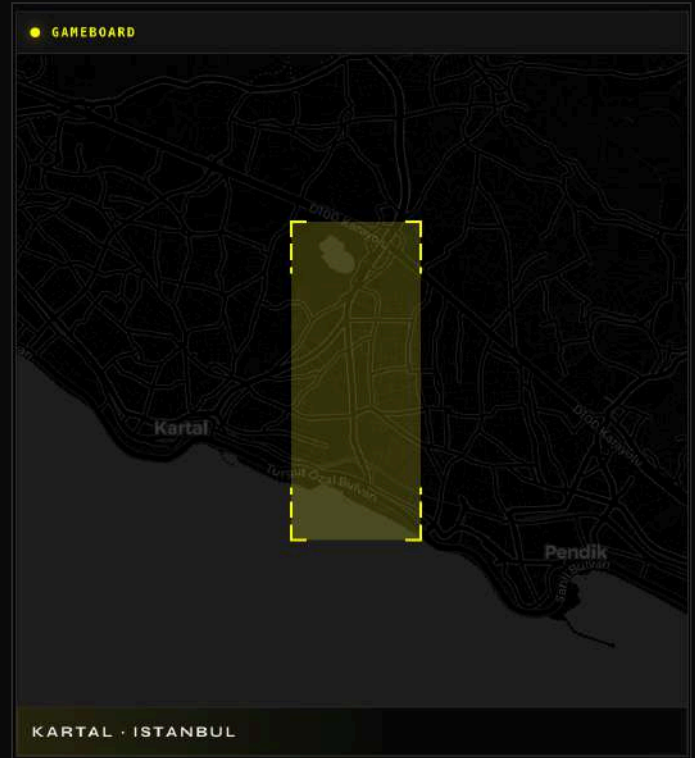
EAAE Pedagogy Awards 2024  
— Finalist

### PUBLICATION

Federighi & Bruno, AADR, 2022

The workshop centres on **Kartal** — a district in active transformation, with regulatory conditions well suited to the game. Students respond to real spatial, regulatory, and stakeholder challenges at the intersection of architectural vision and metropolitan politics.

Here the city is the **gameboard**: a bounded field of competing interests and incomplete information. The stakes must be real — constraints that hold, actors with institutional weight, conditions that resist easy answers.



## ITALY · POLITO

**Politecnico di Torino — DAD**

Department of Architecture and Design: a leading unit dedicated to architecture, urban design, and design — integrating education, research, and knowledge transfer across sustainability, economics, heritage, and cultural production.

## TURKEY · AURA

**AURA Istanbul**

Academy of Architecture and Urban Research — an independent non-profit institution addressing global challenges shaping contemporary cities, with particular focus on Istanbul. Certificate programmes, research, and design initiatives for emerging professionals.

## TURKEY · MSFAU

**Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University**

Faculty of Architecture — among Turkey's oldest institutions (from 1882). Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in architecture, urban design, and city planning engaging Istanbul's transformation.

## KOSOVO · UBT

**UBT College Kosovo**

Pioneering higher education in architecture, urban planning, and design — applied research, sustainability, and technology-driven, project-based learning with international collaboration.

## HOST · KARTAL

**Kartal Municipality**

Under Mayor **Gökhan Yüksel**, Kartal Municipality hosts the Summer School on site — supporting the on-site programme, local institutional dialogue, and the district as a setting for international academic exchange on urban design and transformation.

A ten-day on-site workshop, preceded by three online preparatory seminars — organised around fieldwork, studio production, and reviews.

<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>DAYS ON SITE</b></p> <p>Fieldwork, studio, reviews, presentations</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p><b>GRADUATE STUDENTS</b></p> <p>7 per partner institution</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>FACULTY MEMBERS</b></p> <p>3 per partner institution</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>ONLINE SEMINARS</b></p> <p>Preparatory sessions before arrival</p>
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#### PREPARATORY TIMELINE

TILL 15 JUL

##### Open call for applications

Graduate and master's students in architecture, urban design and planning, City and Regional Planning, and Architecture and Spatial Planning at Politecnico di Torino, AURA Istanbul, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, and UBT College Kosovo — via partner channels and workshop communications.

20 JUL 2026

##### Selection announcement

Results communicated to applicants following review by academic coordinators of the four partner institutions; travel and logistical arrangements initiated.

24–25 AUG 2026

##### Online preparatory seminars

Three seminars across two days. Kick-off Orientation on 31 August. Introduction to methodology, site, and team assignments.

29 AUG – 8 SEP

##### Istanbul workshop

On-site programme in Kartal and across Istanbul.

Students are distributed equally across partner institutions — 7 from Politecnico di Torino, 7 from Istanbul-based institutions (AURA Istanbul and Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University), and 7 from UBT College Kosovo. **Selection:** competitive application evaluated on academic portfolio, CV, and statement of purpose.

9

FACULTY

3 per partner institution

4

PARTNERS

Torino · Istanbul · Kosovo

3

ONLINE SEMINARS

Preparatory sessions before arrival

Faculty accompany and tutor their student groups through the preparatory seminars and on-site programme — facilitating the inter-institutional collaboration central to **The Great Game**.

ITALY

POLITECNICO DI TORINO – DAD

**ALP ARDA**

Main coordinator · PhD Candidate · Architect · Politecnico di Torino (DAD) · Tsinghua University

Architect and PhD candidate in Architecture, History, and Project at Politecnico di Torino, pursuing a dual degree with Tsinghua University under Prof. Michele Bonino and Prof. Lai Yuan 来源. PhD Representative in the DASP programme and Junior Fellow at the China Room. Teaching Fellow for Architectural Design Theory A. Research focuses on the spatial decision infrastructure of Istanbul through urban transformation projects.

**MICHELE BONINO**

Full Professor · Architect · Director of Department of Architecture and Design (DAD) · Politecnico di Torino

Registered Architect with a PhD in History of Architecture and Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at Politecnico di Torino, Head of the Department of Architecture and Design (DAD). Senior Research Fellow at the China Room and Honorary Professor at Harbin Institute of Technology. Principal architect of the Shougang Visitor Centre for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. Invited to the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2004, 2010, 2021, and 2025.

**VALERIA FEDERIGHI**

Adjunct Professor · Architect · Department of Architecture and Design (DAD)

Valeria Federighi (1986) is an architect and adjunct professor at the Politecnico di Torino. Together with Walter Patella, she is the co-founder of the design-build studio Wworks. She is a member of the China Room research group, of the Invisible Cities research group, and co-founder and former editor of the journal *Ardeh* (Architectural Design Theory). She is the author of *The Informal Stance: Representations of Architectural Design and Informal Settlements* (2018, ORO) and co-editor of *Eyes of the City: Architecture and Urban Space after Artificial Intelligence* (2021, Hatje Cantz) and *South-East Europe: 4Cities* (2026).

**EDOARDO BRUNO**

Researcher · Architect · Department of Architecture and Design (DAD)

Edoardo Bruno is an architect and researcher at the Department of Architecture and Design (DAD) of Politecnico di Torino. He is a member of China Room, an interdisciplinary research lab investigating contemporary Chinese architecture and urbanization processes. Working across architectural design, curatorial practice, and field research, he has worked as principal architect and design advisor on international projects between Italy and China and has contributed to curatorial teams for the Shenzhen and Venice Biennales. His recent monographs include *Raggiungere il mare* (DeriveApprodi, 2024), *Progetto e Strategia* (DeriveApprodi, 2024), and *Prosperous Lishui* (ORO Editions, 2023).

TURKEY

AURA ISTANBUL

**YILMAZ DEĞER**

Founding Member

Architect and founding member of AURA Istanbul. Graduated from Istanbul State Fine Arts Academy in 1981. Worked in offices in Zurich and Paris before founding LOTUS Architectural in Istanbul in 1987. Co-founded DEĞER Design Architektur GmbH in Switzerland in 1997 and has led DEĞER Architectural Design since 2015. Lecturer at Yıldız Technical University since 2009 and at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University since 2013.

**SINAN İZGI**

Founding Member

Architect and founding member of AURA Istanbul. Graduated from Mimar Sinan University Faculty of Architecture in 1983; his student project *Time and Space in Cumalıkızık* received the Aga Khan Award. Founded İzgi Architectural Design in 1986 while pursuing a PhD in Urban Design. Has since led nearly four hundred projects across a wide range of scales and programmes. Teaches design studios at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University since 2008, with a focus on ecology, sustainable design, and planning.

**SEDA ALTAN**

Director

Director of AURA Istanbul, overseeing academic programmes, public initiatives, interdisciplinary collaborations, and institutional partnerships. Urban planner trained at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. Her work focuses on fostering critical dialogue around architecture, urbanism, and the built environment through educational, cultural, and research-based initiatives, with a particular emphasis on Istanbul's cultural heritage and the development of emerging architecture and planning professionals.

TURKEY

MIMAR SINAN FINE ARTS UNIVERSITY

**GÜLDEHAN ATAY**

Professor

Architect and academic at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, where she completed her Bachelor, Master's, and PhD in the Building Design and Theory programme. Visiting researcher at the University of Genoa during doctoral studies. Coordinator of the Building Design and Theory Graduate Programme, with over twenty years of teaching across undergraduate design studios and postgraduate courses. Her research focuses on housing, participatory design, urban resilience, cultural heritage, and post-disaster urban recovery.

**KUMRU ÇILGIN**

Assistant Professor

Urban planner and Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University. Holds an MSc from MSFAU and a PhD from Istanbul Technical University on neighbourhood planning within urban transformation processes. Postdoctoral researcher at DIST, Politecnico di Torino (2024–2025). Her research spans planning theory, urban policy, participatory planning, local democracy, urban citizenship, migration-space relations, and rural studies.

**DILVIN HAZAL AKKAYA USMAN**

Lecturer

Architect and lecturer at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, where she completed her Bachelor, Master's, and PhD. Her M.Arch thesis examined the sofa in Sedat Hakkı Eldem's housing architecture; her doctoral dissertation analysed high-rise housing blocks built in Istanbul after 2000 through urban space and block plan. Her research investigates high-rise housing typologies and their integration into the urban fabric, focusing on density, diversity, and urbanity through typomorphological analysis.

KOSOVO

UBT COLLEGE KOSOVO

**LENDI OSMANI**

Architect · Guest Lecturer

Architect working between Kosovo and Italy, with a master's degree from Politecnico di Torino. His thesis on post-conflict educational architecture in Kharkiv was awarded first prize in an international competition to rebuild a war-damaged school in Ukraine, with further first prizes in Lecce and Ravenna. His practice bridges architectural design, urban regeneration, and sustainability. Guest lecturer and mentor at UBT College Kosovo, contributing to knowledge transfer across European institutions.

**SHQIPRIM AHMETI**

Head of Institute

Head of the Institute for Urban Studies and Spatial Planning at UBT College Kosovo, where he teaches within the Faculty of Architecture and Spatial Planning. His research spans urban history, planning theory, urban transport, the socio-political dynamics of urban development, and human-scale planning and design. Recent work includes critical assessments of planning processes in Kosovo (2000–2025) and structured historiographies of Prishtina's urban development, pursued through international collaborations.

**BINAK BEQAJ**

Dean · Faculty of Architecture and Spatial Planning

Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Spatial Planning and Professor at UBT College Kosovo. His work focuses on urban planning, public space, and housing. Has authored numerous architectural design projects and supervised construction works across Kosovo, including social housing programmes for the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning. Served on international juries for urban master plan competitions in Prishtina. Publishes on urbanisation, public space regeneration, and the architecture-engineering interface.

The full programme calendar, from the online preparatory seminars through to the final closing ceremony.

REMOTE: // PRE-WORKSHOP.GREATGAME ● LIVE ◆ 3 SESSIONS ◆ 2 DAYS ◆		
DATE	LOCATION / MODE	PROGRAMME
<b>SUN</b> 24 AUG 2026	Online Lead: Torino Team Mod: Alp Arda	<b>Seminar 1 – Introduction to The Great Game</b> Structure, rules, operational logic, and organisational framework. Group division, actor introductions, pool-based group making. (20 min + 10 min Q&A)
<b>MON</b> 25 AUG 2026	Online Lead: AURA & MSFAU (S2); UBT Kosovo (S3)	<b>Seminar 2 – Istanbul at macro scale</b> Historical, social, and economic dynamics; ongoing urban transformation and the city's historical background. (20 min + 5 min Q&A)  <b>Seminar 3 – Critical perspectives</b> Professional viewpoints on contemporary architecture and urban design practice. (10 min + 5 min Q&A)
ON SITE ◆ ISTANBUL ◆ 29 AUG – 8 SEP 2026 ◆ 10 DAYS ◆		
DATE	LOCATION / MODE	MORNING / AFTERNOON / EVENING
<b>SAT</b> 29 AUG 2026	On-site Airport(s) → Hotel Coord: Alp Arda	<b>Arrival in Istanbul</b> Arrival of Torino and Kosovo delegations. Hotel check-in.
<b>SUN</b> 30 AUG 2026	On-site Hotel → Kartal → Hangar studio	<b>Field survey - Kartal</b> Field survey and site exploration in Kartal. Lunch at Kartal Çarşısı.  <b>Studio begins – Hangar</b> First roundtable discussions; commencement of initial design work.
<b>MON</b> 31 AUG 2026	Hybrid City tour → AURA İstanbul (Beşiktaş)	<b>Macro-scale city orientation</b> Hotel → Kadıköy → Kabataş → Eminönü → Galata Bridge → Hagia Sophia. Lunch at Sultanahmet.  <b>Kick-off · 17:00 – AURA İstanbul</b> Briefing on the previous day's Kartal visit + 2 online guest lectures (20+20 min) + Q&A + team introductions + closing reflection.
<b>TUE</b> 01 SEP 2026	On-site Kartal sites (3 groups) → Hangar	<b>Independent site visits + studio</b> Three guided groups across Kartal.  <b>Roundtable 1 · 17:30</b> 5-min presentation per student team, with feedback from the teaching team.
<b>WED</b> 02 SEP 2026	On-site Galataport → Mimar Sinan Museum → MSFAU	<b>Galataport + Mimar Sinan Museum visit</b> Visit to Galataport (recently completed waterfront transformation) and the Mimar Sinan Museum. Lunch at MSFAU.  <b>MSFAU session + Wild card</b> Collective working and reflection at MSFAU. Late afternoon: local actor visit (~1 hour).

DATE	LOCATION / MODE	MORNING / AFTERNOON / EVENING
<b>THU</b> <b>03 SEP</b> 2026	Hybrid Hangar (studio + online lecture)	<p><b>Morning – collective work at the Hangar</b></p> <p><b>Live lecture · 10:00</b> Comparative perspectives on urban transformation. (~35 min + 15 min dialogue)</p> <p><b>Wild card · afternoon</b> Client / actor visit; working session continues until 17:00.</p> <p><b>Roundtable 2 · 17:00</b> 5-min presentation per student team, with feedback from the teaching team.</p>
<b>FRI</b> <b>04 SEP</b> 2026	On-site Hangar İstanbul (hybrid if guest joins remotely)	<p><b>Studio session – full day</b> Working session at the Hangar.</p> <p><b>International guest · TBC</b> Potential additional international guest – slot and mode to be confirmed.</p>
<b>SAT</b> <b>05 SEP</b> 2026	Hybrid Hotel → AURA İstanbul	<p><b>Hybrid lecture – late morning</b> Topic and speaker TBC.</p> <p><b>Wild card – midday</b> Wild card actor moment.</p> <p><b>Working session – afternoon</b> Collective working session and presentation moment.</p>
<b>SUN</b> <b>06 SEP</b> 2026	On-site Hangar	<p><b>Half-day studio – morning</b> Working session at the Hangar. 12:30 collective presentation.</p> <p><b>Afternoon</b> Free time / preparation for Monday's public review.</p>
<b>MON</b> <b>07 SEP</b> 2026	On-site Hangar (morning) → Istituto Italiano di Cultura İstanbul	<p><b>Morning – working session at the Hangar</b></p> <p><b>14:30 – departure to Istituto Italiano di Cultura</b></p> <p><b>16:00 – Public review</b> Opening speech → coordination intro → 5-min team presentations → closing discussion → aperitivo.</p> <p><b>19:00 – return to hotel</b></p>
<b>TUE</b> <b>08 SEP</b> 2026  EXHIBITION + CLOSING	On-site Hangar	<p><b>08:00–14:00 – final studio session at the Hangar</b></p> <p><b>14:00–15:00 – printing and installation of exhibition</b></p> <p><b>15:00–17:30 – final presentations and public exhibition</b></p> <p><b>17:30 – closing ceremony</b> With Mayor Gökhan Yüksel and all participants.</p> <p><b>19:00 – closing dinner</b></p>

Candidates apply through the digital form for their home institution. Open to graduate and master's students in architecture, urban design and planning, City and Regional Planning, and Architecture and Spatial Planning at Politecnico di Torino, AURA Istanbul, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, and UBT College Kosovo.

**Credits:** Politecnico di Torino students receive **3 CFU** upon successful completion. All participants receive a **joint certificate** from Politecnico di Torino, AURA Istanbul, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, and UBT College Kosovo. **Travel:** Politecnico di Torino students will receive **€300 travel reimbursement**.

**Deadline:** till 15 July.

For questions about applications, the programme, or logistics, contact workshop coordination.

#### PORTFOLIO

Portfolio of academic and design work in PDF format (max 10 MB)

#### MOTIVATION LETTER

No more than one A4 page – interest in the workshop and expected contribution

#### STUDENT CERTIFICATE

Official documentation confirming current enrolment as graduate or master's student at your home institution

#### APPLICATION FORMS

Eligibility, accommodation, travel, and other institution-specific details are set out in each form – please refer to the application form that corresponds to your home institution. Apply online at [thegreatgame-istanbul.com](http://thegreatgame-istanbul.com).

ITALY  
POLITECNICO DI TORINO

[APPLICATION FORM](#)

TURKEY  
UNIVERSITIES FROM TURKEY

[APPLICATION FORM](#)

KOSOVO  
UBT COLLEGE KOSOVO

[APPLICATION FORM](#)

**Issues with the form?** Send your portfolio, motivation letter, and student certificate directly by email to [thegreatgame.istanbul@gmail.com](mailto:thegreatgame.istanbul@gmail.com).

"The [Detroit] Great Game presents a captivating and timely pedagogical experiment and offers a much-needed rethinking of the playful dimension of architectural education. Federighi and Bruno offer a fresh pragmatist perspective on the reality of project-making, tracing the contingencies, negotiations, documentary exchange, promises, and contextual complexities of architecture in the making. Vividly written and filled with insightful examples and innovative graphics, it is a must-read for every student, academic and practitioner in Architecture."

– ALBENA YANEVA · UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

"The [Detroit] Great Game demonstrates that no architectural project is autonomous from the world, and that all projects catapult their players into an unpredictable future. It follows that all projects are susceptible to the vicissitudes of contingent encounters and unexpected roadblocks. Such is the great game of designing worlds on fields of immanence where documents and contracts hold equal weight to material objects. Groping experimentation and experience come first, know-how and knowledge afterwards. Enjoy this great game! Play it seriously!"

– HÉLÈNE FRICHOT · UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

## REFERENCES

**BOOK · 2022**

Federighi, V. & Bruno, E. (2022). *The Detroit Great Game: Explorations around architectural design and its agency*.  
Baunach: AADR. ISBN 978-3-88778-621-2

**VIDEO**

The Great Game — video presentation.  
[youtube.com/watch?v=iLyEYrEFGoM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLyEYrEFGoM)

**AWARD · 2024**

EAAE Pedagogy Awards 2024 — Finalist.  
[eaae.eu/news-and-events/events/finalists-eaae-pedagogy-awards-2024-2](https://eaae.eu/news-and-events/events/finalists-eaae-pedagogy-awards-2024-2)

Politecnico di Torino, AURA, MSGSU, UBT, summer workshop 2026

# THE GREAT GAME — ISTANBUL

kartal\* district

apply here!



online:  
24 aug.-25 aug.

on-site:  
**29 aug.-8 sep.**

application deadline:  
15 july, 2026

[thegreatgame-istanbul.com](http://thegreatgame-istanbul.com)  
[thegreatgame.istanbul@gmail.com](mailto:thegreatgame.istanbul@gmail.com)

Alp ARDA  
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Kumru CILGIN  
Dilvin H. A. USMAN

Lendi OSMANI  
Shqiprim AHMETI  
Binak BEQAJ

workshop language:  
ENGLISH

Politecnico di Torino

AURA Istanbul

Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University

UBT College Kosovo

### why this workshop?

An international summer school as a role-playing game, bringing together 21 graduate students from Politecnico di Torino - DAD, UBT Kosovo, AURA Istanbul and Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University to negotiate the future of Kartal, Istanbul. Over 10 days of fieldwork, studio production, and international guests, The Great Game methodology comes to Istanbul for the first time.

**Credits:** Politecnico di Torino students receive 3 CFU upon successful completion. All participants receive a joint certificate from Politecnico di Torino, AURA Istanbul, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, and UBT College Kosovo.

Accommodation is supported by Kartal Municipality for students from Italy and Kosovo and non-Istanbul participants. Travel is the responsibility of each student, selected students from the Politecnico di Torino, additionally receive a contribution of €300 travel reimbursement.



# APPLY BY

# 15 JULY

# 2026

to be part of the inaugural Istanbul edition.



[THEGREATGAME-ISTANBUL.COM](https://thegreatgame-istanbul.com)  
[THEGREATGAME.ISTANBUL@GMAIL.COM](mailto:thegreatgame.istanbul@gmail.com)

SCAN FOR WORKSHOP INFO & APPLICATION

## WORKSHOP LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

A JOINT INITIATIVE OF  
POLITECNICO DI TORINO · AURA ISTANBUL · MİMAR SİNAN FINE ARTS UNIVERSITY · UBT COLLEGE KOSOVO

HOSTED BY  
KARTAL MUNICIPALITY

