# The Social Turn:
# The Performance Designer
# as Trigger for Active Co-existence

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PhD Thesis

Declaration:

This thesis represents partial submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Royal College of Art. I confirm that the work presented here is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis. During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

# Abstract

This practice-based research asks how performance design can be used towards triggering active co-existence in contested public spaces. The site of research is the south walled city of Nicosia, in Cyprus.

The investigation aims to find tools for the performance designer to take on a more active political role. To achieve this, the research draws from social art practice. By investigating the role of the performance designer, the research contributes towards the expanding field of scenography, and seeks to establish the contribution of the field towards socially engaged practices (agency of objects, space and materiality, as well as that of the movement of bodies). Through this practice, performance design is taken outside of theatrical orthodoxies and applied as a methodology into the urban site. This process allows the investigation to expand and problematise on the notion of site specificity.

The practice-based research focuses on Phaneromeni Square, a contested public space due to gentrification, in the south walled city of Nicosia. Nicosia is the last divided capital in Europe and deals with debates around equality and the use of space across lines of ethnicity, class, gender and age, as well as claims to territory and of national belonging, on a daily basis. These debates tend to be overshadowed by the Cyprus Problem, the ethno-national matter that has been at the epicentre of public discourse over the last five decades. As a result, the interest of most members of the artistic community whose work focuses on the walled city of Nicosia, tends to be directed towards the Buffer Zone and the conflicts that arise from the ethno-national matter. This enquiry acknowledges the importance and the effect of the Buffer Zone in Nicosia, which is still in place. However, the thesis chooses to focus on the urgent matter of the growing number of domesticated and privatised public spaces in the south walled city.

To identify the multiple layers of complexity entangled in these public spaces, the investigation draws from cultural geography, and Doreen Massey's (2005) concept of the spatio-temporal event. The notions of the political and of agonism, as defined by Chantal Mouffe (2005; 2013), are used to define a new concept: active co-existence. The thesis employs theories on domestication, privatisation and gentrification to outline types of contested public spaces. The theoretical frameworks inform the practice of this research and contribute to the notion of site specificity. The practice is carried out by designing a series of tools for temporary scenographic interventions. The scenographic interventions are intended to: a) be used as methods of research by other artists and designers, whose practice is concerned with contested public spaces, to determine the needs and conflicts between different users and stakeholders; b) act as methods of social engagement and as triggers for active co-existence; and c) be deployed as educational toolkits. Finally, by identifying the role of the performance designer as trigger for active co-existence, the research develops a manifesto for the performance designer as social agent.

***Key words:*** performance design, social art practice, public space, site specificity, conflict.

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## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I wish to thank my supervisors, Dr Melanie Jordan and Dr Socrates Stratis, not only for their academic direction and feedback, but for their personal support, enthusiasm and encouragement throughout the whole process.

I would like to thank the A.G. Leventis Foundation for the scholarship that funded part of this research project.

Thank you to all the participants and interviewees for their time and valuable insights. I would also like to thank all those (who wish to remain unnamed) who shared stories and information about the youth in Phaneromeni Square. I wish to thank Panix for sharing his photographic archive with me, and digital material from flyers produced by Antifa λευkoşa and Skapoula.

I would like to thank formal and informal advisors who engaged in lengthy conversations with me and helped me to progress the project and shape it to what it is today. Michael Spencer, for the Skype conversations on scenography and performance design in the urban environment. Dr Evanthia Tselika for the many discussions on socially engaged practice in relation to Nicosia. Lara Bastajian for being a brilliant copy editor. Anne Karin ten Bosch from Platform Scenography, for her time and Skype conversation, which helped shape the thinking process behind the methodological approach of the Scenographic Interventions.

I wish to thank the anonymous peer reviewers and all who gave me informal feedback and advice at conferences, symposia and workshops.

Thank you to Despina Hadjilouca for her countless hours of reading my papers and chapters over the years, correcting my grammar and sharing her feedback with me. A particular thank you to my parents, Yiannis and Mary Hadjiloucas, and my godmother Anna Achilleos, for their unconditional support and for partly funding this PhD.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my husband Alexandros, for supporting me and encouraging me throughout the PhD.

## Introduction

## The political potential of performance design

In March 2017, design academics Ezio Manzini and Victor Margolin wrote an open letter to the design community inviting us to "stand up for Democracy", and to recognise the strong convergence between democracy and design; a provocation that could not be more relevant in the present day. The two design scholars explained how this convergence can be achieved through four actions:

> 1. *design of democracy*, improving democratic processes and the institutions on which democracy is built; 2. *design for democracy*, involving issues of access and transparency, allowing more people, especially using technology, to participate in the democratic process; 3. *design in democracy*, including projects that help to bring about conditions of equality and justice; 4. *design as democracy*, whereby the equitable and inclusive principles of participatory design set a stage on which diverse actors can come together to share constitutive power in shaping the present and future world we live in. (Manzini and Margolin, 2017)

In previous writings, Manzini (2013; 2015) discussed the importance of designers, and how they can act as a *trigger* to start new social conversations; designers can operate as key factors by designing with and for communities. Manzini proposes the term *contemporary designer* within social practices, which is based on an interdisciplinary and collaborative process:

> Design is a culture and a practice concerning how things ought to be in order to attain desired functions and meanings. It takes place within open-ended co-design processes in which all the involved actors participate in different ways. It is based on a human capability that everyone can cultivate and which for some - the design experts - becomes a profession. The role of design experts is to trigger and support these open-ended co-design processes, using their design knowledge to conceive and enhance clear-cut focused design initiatives. (Manzini, 2015, p.53)

Through the use of creativity and interdisciplinarity, designers can 'make things happen' and therefore further develop and sustain the social conversation and the political in developing the urban. This practice-based investigation draws from the last two actions on the convergence of design and democracy: *design in democracy* and *design as democracy.* Furthermore, the enquiry uses Manzini's concept of the contemporary designer and his notion of trigger, as a starting point, to pose the question of how a performance designer can become a more critical practitioner outside theatrical confines.

The premise of this research is to establish the political potential of performance design when taken into the urban site. Specifically, this enquiry intends to examine the capacity of the expanding field, outside the conventional modes of practice found within the theatrical form. The thesis seeks determine the role of performance design when practiced within neoliberalised contested public spaces facing regeneration and privatisation. To achieve this, I argue that we should look at social art practice and the paradigm of why artists produce work as politics rather than convivial practices (Marchart, 2019). Over the last two decades, there has been a strong discourse on the political action of social art practice (Deutsche, 1998; Mouffe, 2007; Marchart, 2019). It is my hypothesis that by drawing methods from social art practice and applying them to the field of performance design, we can enhance the latter's critical stance. By developing a politicised practice of performance design through social art, I am anticipating to provide an alternative narrative to the predominant European and North American discourses on the expanding field of performance design. It is not about excluding one form of performance design from the other, it is about contributing towards an expanding practice, beyond the stage. To achieve this, I draw from scholarship and practice paradigms by scenographers who are currently leading the way towards the expansion of the field (Beer, 2018; Brejzek, 2011; 2012; Hann, 2019; 2020; Hannah and Harsløf, 2008; Shearing, 2016).

I chose to conduct my research in the south walled city of Nicosia, in Cyprus, where scenography as a field is understood as a highly traditional form of stage

design, and to have the sole purpose of serving the dramaturgical text and (more often) the directorial vision. Moreover, the portion of the city that is walled - the medieval part of the capital city, Nicosia – is currently governed by a neoliberal local authority and also undergoing a process of gentrification. Furthermore, due to the Cypriot ethno-national matter,[1] which led to the capital's division, the artistic and design community has centred its focus towards the Buffer Zone and the bi-communal conflict, often neglecting the urgent matter of domestication and privatisation of the capital's public spaces. The site of research for this practice-based investigation is Phaneromeni Square (Figure 1), a contested public space within the south walled city of Nicosia, that has gone through regeneration and is facing privatisation. As someone who was born and raised in the post-conflict Nicosia and who spent their adolescent years in the walled city, the area as a site to practice in, and research in, bears a particular interest to me.



*Figure 1.* The location of Phaneromeni Square
marked on the road map of Nicosia.

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[1] The ethno-national matter, also known as the Cyprus Problem, is an ongoing dispute between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. The status quo dates back to 1974 with the Turkish troops' invasion and occupation of the northern third of the island (Pantelidou and Hadjicosti, 2002). The geopolitical context of Nicosia will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Due to the nature of the research, it is impossible not to talk about site specificity. From the perspective of performance design, site specificity is understood as the practice in which "the work emerges from a particular place and engages with the history and politics of that place, and with the resonance of these [elements] in the present" (McAuley, 2005). Rosalyn Deutsche, through a critical discourse on the notion of site-specific art, made a key distinction between two models. The affirmative model, in which the artwork is designed for integration into the existing environment, and the interruptive model in which the artwork functions as a critical intervention in the site through some kind of disruption (Deutsche, 1998). By seeking to expand the role of the performance designer to one that is political, the investigation draws from Deutsche's interruptive model, and accordingly criticises the affirmative as one that is often instrumentalised by local authorities and developers in processes of regeneration. By this process I establish a discussion for the politics that could surround performance design in relation to the perils of instrumentalisation. Through this investigation, I reconsider site specificity and combine Deutsche's interruptive model with the concept of site specificity as it is understood within performance design. By this action, I propose a model that is not about imposing an answer, but rather raising questions and problematising. Phaneromeni, as a regenerated public space facing privatisation, also faces the danger of homogenisation. It is through this deliberation that I have formed the overarching question:

*"How can performance design be used to trigger active co-existence in the regenerated, contested public spaces of the south walled city of Nicosia?"*

### 0.1 Aim and objectives

The aim of this practice-based research project has been to explore the ways in which performance designers can play an active political role, informed by social art practice, in the contested public spaces of the south walled city of Nicosia, in Cyprus. In particular, the aim was to see what would happen when performance designers trigger actions for active co-existence in the contested public spaces within the capital city. The spaces that this enquiry refers to as contested are those threatened by privatisation and gentrification.

The objectives of this research were to define the new notion of active co-existence as proposed by this enquiry, as well as to discuss the field of scenography and performance design outside theatrical orthodoxies and to identify any gaps in knowledge and practice. Furthermore, this investigation sought to examine social art practice and the discourses around it. Through this process, the aim was to draw methods and concepts to inform the practice of performance design. To achieve this, the enquiry focused on one site, Phaneromeni Square, as a case study for the practice-based research. The practice was developed through the following tools: the Scenographic Interventions, the Toolkit for Scenographic Interventions, and the Manifesto on the Role of the Performance Designer. The series of scenographic interventions act as the research-led practice, in the form of design experiments, which in turn inform the toolkit. The toolkit can be used as a tangible instrument by performance designers, artists and architects who engage with urban sites in a critical way. Finally, the manifesto is a celebration of the expanding field of performance design, and acts as a provocation. It invites us to open up to new ways of thinking and producing work, and new ways of exploring and expanding the site outside of theatrical orthodoxies. Through the creation of the toolkit and manifesto, I propose that performance design is an interventional practice of a temporary and agonistic nature.

### 0.1.1 Research enquiry

To carry out the aim and objectives of this investigation, I broke down my research question ("How can performance design be used to trigger active co-existence in the regenerated, contested public spaces of the south walled city of Nicosia?") into five sub-questions. These sub-questions have acted as the main axis of the thesis and helped me design the research and navigate through it. Each chapter responds to one question.

1. In what ways can performance design be informed by social art practice?

2. What are the frameworks used to inform the practice of the performance designer within the redeveloped, contested public spaces?

3. How does the historical, political and social context of the south walled city of Nicosia affect the choice of methods used?

4. What is defined as a 'regenerated, contested public space', within the context of Nicosia?

5. What is defined as 'active co-existence' in the contested public spaces of Nicosia?

The literature review spans the first two chapters and aims to firstly frame the field of research and identify the gaps in knowledge, and secondly, to build a set of theoretical frameworks to support the argument on the role of the performance designer as social agent. Through a review of theories and discourse on space (Massey, 2005), social space (Lefebvre, 1991), conflict and the concept of agonistic pluralism (Mouffe, 2005; 2013), I build a set of coherent principles on active co-existence. This research, while acknowledging the array of socially engaged practices worldwide that use interventions as part of their methodology, examines examples of current practices concerned with the neoliberal city (Harvey, 2005; 2012; Zukin, 2009) and the role of the designer/artist as social actor (Deutsche, 1998; Kester, 2004; Kwon, 2004; Bishop, 2006; 2012; Berry and Iles, 2010; Manzini, 2015; 2019; Marchart, 2019), in order to inform and contextualise the investigation. The literature and practice reviews set out to draw concepts and methods from social art practice to inform the role of the performance designer within the urban realm. Moreover, in order to build on the argument of the interdisciplinarity of performance design and the synergy of fields that this enquiry speaks of, the literature research spreads in the fields of co-design, participatory design, urban design, cultural geography and social studies. To develop and evaluate tangible methods for social action through the practice of performance design, I designed and executed a series of scenographic interventions, which acted as research tools for the case study of Phaneromeni Square.

The scenographic interventions were temporary and have been designed through an iterative process based on the specificity of the site and the actors (users and stakeholders). The designs were based on the narratives gathered through interviews and observations, and have been shaped according to changes in time, space and movement. By using the method of iteration, I was able to develop the interventions and understand how they inform the performance designer through different time periods. The process of iteration also acted as an apparatus for self-reflexivity and for testing assumptions that may have been carried-out over the years through my personal link to the area. The study of the site enabled the gathering of visual, verbal, historical and behavioural information in order to depict the conflicts in and around the specific space; the development and testing of methods and techniques that would stimulate active co-existence between the actors; the development and testing of the role of the performance designer in social engagement; and the contribution towards the development of the notion of active co-existence. I used insights from contextual and theoretical research, as well as from the outcomes of the interventions, to develop a manifesto for the role of the performance designer as social actor within the urban environment. This manifesto acts as an invitation and an apparatus for problematisation around the politics of the autonomous practice.

## 0.2 Gaps in knowledge and contributions

This enquiry contributes to the scholarship around the emergent field of scenography and to social art practice within the urban environment. At the same time, the research focuses on the south walled city of Nicosia and contributes to the scenographic and artistic practice of the country. Each contribution is discussed below.

### 0.2.1 The synergy between the field of performance design and socially engaged art practice

Research sub-question No. 1 seeks to establish the contribution of social art practice to performance design within the urban environment. By addressing this question, the enquiry also aims to determine the agency of objects, space and materiality, as well as the agency of movement of bodies. The concept of

performance design, as an applied methodology in the urban environment and a way to include the above, can be seen as a contribution to the expanding field of scenography and the wider field of social art practice. While site specificity, as defined by Kwon (2002), within a socially engaged project can be expected, I argue that the agency of: a) objects within a project, b) the bodies and their movements, and c) the space and the politics of engagement it maintains, as well as the challenges of local antagonism, should be equally and carefully considered.

### 0.2.2 Application of performance design outside the theatrical realm and into the urban milieu

The research is contributing to the field of scenography in terms of both theory and practice. Scenography is a highly contentious concept, which is constantly being re-defined and re-evaluated. This enquiry explores how we can take performance design (an expanding field deriving from the scenographic sphere) from the confines of theatrical orthodoxies and apply it into the urban milieu. Thus, we can achieve a more critical stance for the field. Through this action, I maintain that the performance designer can achieve an active social and political role. The potential of this practice for social change within the urban realm is highlighted in Chapter 1, through a contextual and theoretical analysis. Building on this, the frameworks in Chapter 2 contribute towards a post-disciplinary notion of performance design.

### 0.2.3 The south walled city of Nicosia, its public spaces and social engagement

As briefly mentioned, there is a lack of attention given to the socio-political issues within the urban milieu in Cyprus, not only from the polity, but also from artistic and design practices. The ethno-national matter – due to its importance – has been at the centre of attention in Cyprus for more than 46 years, causing other important social issues to be overlooked. The south walled city of Nicosia is a unique site, as it is currently the only divided capital in Europe. While the ethno-national matter in Cyprus has not yet been resolved, Nicosia, and by extension the country, remains in a post-conflict state (Calame and Charlesworth, 2009). Furthermore, scenography in Cyprus is seen in its traditional form of a

hierarchical practice of stage design, primarily serving a dramaturgical text, or the directorial vision.

Chapter 3 provides a historical review of Nicosia and discusses the effects that the ethno-national matter has had socially and spatially on the urban milieu of the capital. In section 3.3, I discuss the artistic and design practices that have been dealing with the ethno-national matter, conflict resolution and the urban space in the south walled city of Nicosia since 2003, a milestone year due to the opening of the checkpoints. In this section, I consider the lack of focus towards the gentrification of the walled city and the dangers of privatising its public spaces.

The research contributes towards the scenographic and artistic practices of Cyprus in a unique way, through the application of performance design and social art practice within the urban milieu of the south walled city of Nicosia. Moreover, the enquiry contributes towards the discussion of the neoliberalisation of urban public spaces in Cyprus.

### 0.2.4 The new notion of *active co-existence*

This enquiry introduces *active co-existence* as a term that is a host of multiplicities, born through the synergy of performance design and social art practice, when practiced in the neoliberalised contested urban milieu.

At a first level, active co-existence is about the agonistic concurrence of citizens in public space. However, it is this investigation's assertion that, through this notion and its practice, which lead to an understanding of the spatio-temporal and of co-existences of histories and spatial agencies within time, we are able to decode a site. By doing so, we are able to inform and transform site specificity.

### 0.2.5 The Toolkit for Scenographic Interventions

The toolkit, as one of the thesis' practice-based outcomes, acts as an interdisciplinary instrument for social change and for research-led practices in the contested urban milieu. This toolkit can be used by performance designers, social art practitioners, urban designers, architects and cultural geographers, who

investigate neoliberalised public spaces. The toolkit can be used as a pedagogical instrument when introducing research in the urban environment for social change and in discussing how performance design can be applied outside theatrical confines.

### 0.2.6 The Manifesto for the Role of the Performance Designer

The manifesto developed as part of the practice of this research is another contribution to knowledge. It informs the literature of scenography and further expands the role of the performance designer, pushing it beyond theatrical orthodoxies. The performance designer ceases to be solely a creator of spectacles, but takes up the role of a social agent actively involved in urban transformation.

### 0.3 Methodological approach: practice-based research and research-led practice; interweaving practice and research

This practice-based research can be considered what Koskinen and Gall Krogh (2015) describe as constructive design research. This type of research needs to build on design practice in order to be relevant for practitioners in terms of knowledge, methods, processes and quality of aesthetics. Koskinen and Gall Krogh (2015) point out that "researchers who hold themselves accountable to [arts] and design aim to do research that practitioners will understand, respect and take seriously". This enquiry is using practice as a main medium throughout the process of examination and the development of outcomes. In this section, I will analyse the notions of *practice-based research* and *research-led practice;* I will discuss how this investigative approach is used for the purposes of this enquiry and how it provides for a detailed investigation in order to produce a contribution to knowledge.

I argue that, while this investigation is practice-based, it also incorporates elements of practice-led research and research-led practice due to its interdisciplinary character. Within practice-based research, the creative outcome forms part of the contribution to knowledge. As Skains (2018) points out "this method is applied to original investigations seeking new knowledge through practice and its outcomes". Practice-led research, as defined by Candy (2006), is a

form of research that relates to the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge with an operative significance for that practice. This type of research includes practice as an important part in its methodology. Smith, et al. (2009) discuss the importance of practice-led research and how it delivers new ways of thinking about research and new methodologies for conducting it.

Research-led practice, on the other hand, is terminology used by Smith, et al. (2009) that suggests scholarly research can lead to creative work. Within this investigation, the method is applied in order to compose a series of social engagement tools through performance design. The practice is carried out through a series of design experiments in the form of scenographic interventions, as well as a series of workshops. The design experiments are informed by the insights generated throughout the research and via an iterative process. Through research-led practice and the method of iteration, I produce a toolkit for scenographic interventions in the contested urban realm. The practice-led process is applied within the case study of this enquiry – Phaneromeni Square – where through an interdisciplinary mode of practice I have depicted the social and spatial components of the square and uncovered the need for what I term *active co-existence*. Moreover, by applying research-led practice, I generate a manifesto on the role of the performance designer as a trigger to introduce and sustain this kind of co-existence.

To demonstrate how the practice interweaves with the research throughout the process of this investigation, I have followed the basic structure of the 'Iterative cyclic web model of practice-led research and research-led practice' (Figure 2) created by Smith, et al. (2009). The iterative cyclic web is addressed to artists and accommodates practice-led research, research-led practice, creative work and basic research. The cyclic web shows how academic research and practice can be integrated.

The diagram suggests how a creative or research process may start at any point in the overarching cycle and move, spider-like, to any other. Smith, et al. (2009) discuss the importance of iteration in this model, which responds to the small

cycles. They explain that "the creator must choose between alternative results created by the iteration, focusing on some and leaving others behind". By "iteration", Smith, et al. mean the process of repetition with modifications based on what has been acquired beforehand, which is the process that this investigation also follows.

My own thesis map (Figure 3) is a simplified version of the cycle, which retains the main elements of iteration and of moving spider-like between the points in the overarching cycle. The large cycle forms the umbrella of this practice-based research and demonstrates the input and combination of practice-led research and of research-led practice. Unlike the original iterative cyclic web, instead of moving in both directions, in this diagram, we only move clockwise. My version of the iterative cyclic web demonstrates how scholarly research and practice interweave throughout the stages of the investigation. Our starting point is the research question, as well as the aims and objectives of this enquiry; as they lead us to the final outcome, they are also expanded and transformed through iteration. The research question, aims, and objectives of this examination feed into every point of the cycle. The thesis map has allowed the creative process to lead to the new knowledge stated in section 0.1, and specialised research insights, which have then been translated into the final thesis and practical outcomes. I have used the thesis map as a tool to visualise each step and iteration that this investigation has undergone (Appendix 1).
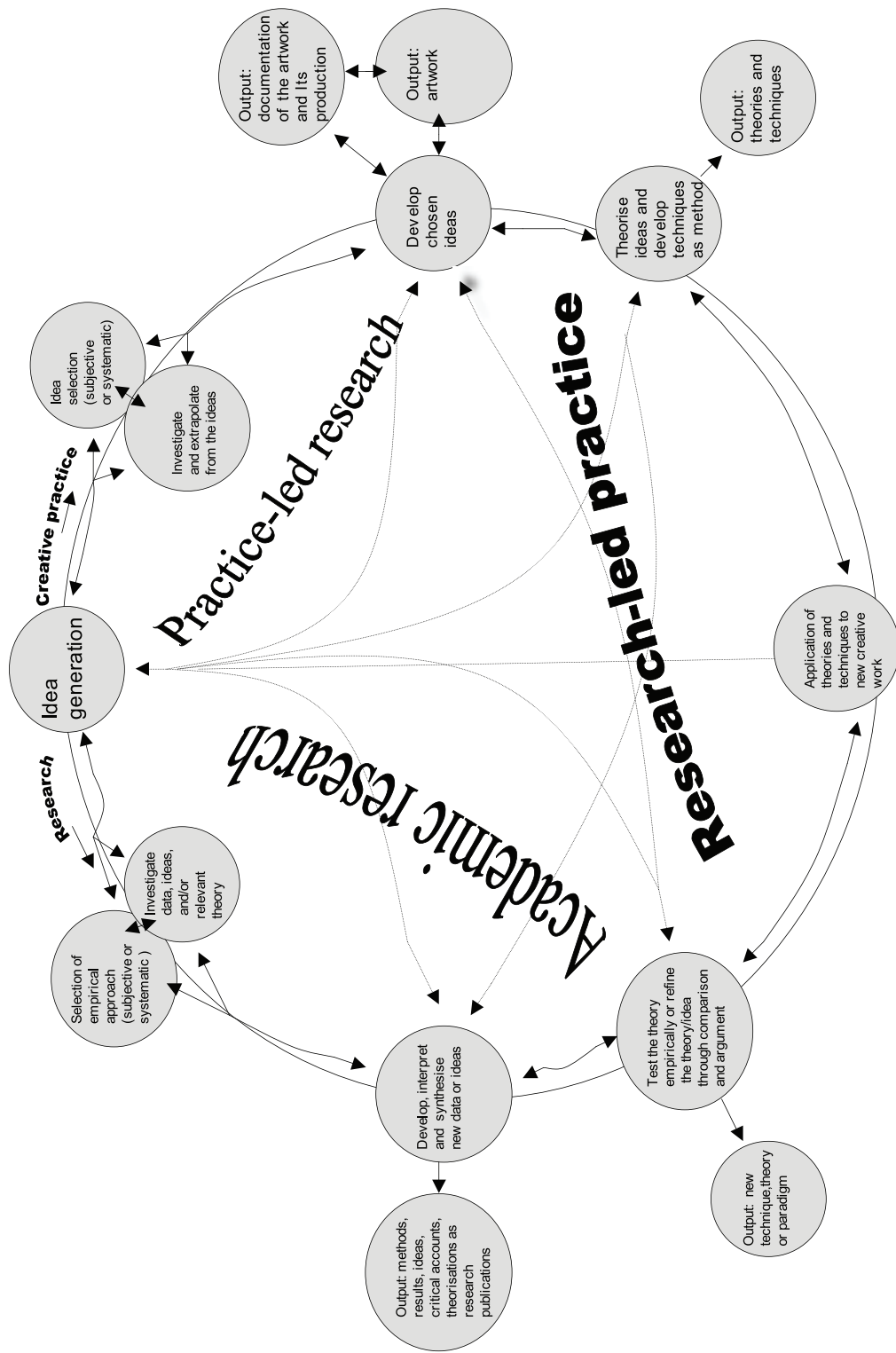
***Figure 2.*** The iterative cyclic web of practice-led research and research-led practice (Smith, et al., 2009)
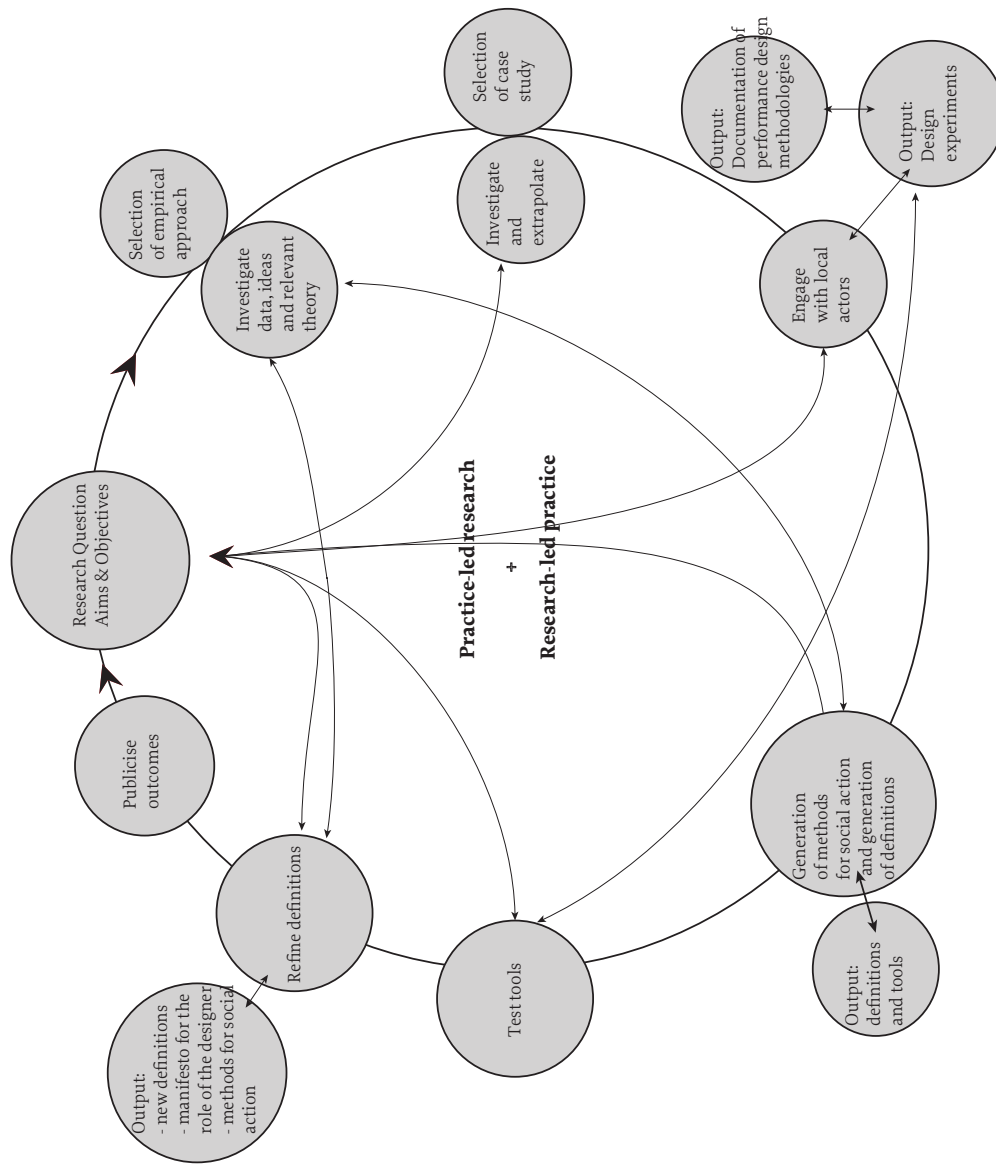
*Figure 3.* The Thesis Map based on the iterative cyclic web mode. Adapted and designed by the author.

### 0.3.1 Diagrammatic thinking

In the next chapters of this thesis, it will become evident to the reader that the thesis map and the iterative cycles form one of the examples of how diagrammatic thinking was applied as a methodology throughout the course of this research project. I argue that the use of a diagrams enables us to construct new ways of

relating to the unknown, of unfolding the dynamics of orientation in the theoretical and practical world (Deleuze, 2006; (Drucker, 2013 )). By this abstract form of communication, we can relate to an assemblage of ideas. This is a process that can be found within performance design and theatre making, in the forms of blocking, of drafting technical drawing and of storyboarding.

This process has allowed me to examine the relational aspect between performance design and social art practice and develop my theoretical frameworks for this thesis. Furthermore, the diagrammatic thinking has acted as a valuable comparative method within my practice and supported my analytical thinking towards my findings. Through this process I was able to depict the relational aspect of the space, object and of the actors within each scenographic intervention. Diagrammatic thinking has functioned as an exploratory and comparative tool between different elements within the literature and the practice. The process of diagrammatising knowledge is evident in Chapters 1, 4 and 5.

### 0.4 Chapter outlines

This thesis forms part of this PhD research, alongside the scenographic interventions, the toolkit, and the manifesto produced as part of the practice-based investigation.

Chapter 1, 'Literature review: performance design through social art practice in the urban environment', provides an understanding of the fields of study, and through a literature and contextual review, pinpoints the gaps in knowledge within the two fields. Through a background of the field of scenography and the

process of defining the notion of performance design, I outline the contribution of this research towards the former. In this chapter, by responding to sub-question No. 1, I make a case on the ways in which social art practice may contribute to the expanding field of performance design.

Chapter 2, 'Theoretical review: on space, site and conflict', details the theoretical frameworks that underpin my approach towards active co-existence within contested public spaces (research sub-question No. 2). Moreover, the chapter discusses how these frameworks inform this investigation's research methods.

Chapter 3, 'The site of research: on Nicosia', presents the site of research. In this chapter, I deal with research sub-question No. 3 and review the historical and political context of Nicosia. By this process, we are able to identify the political and social conflicts related to the city in the 20th century and discuss how the processes of gentrification and neoliberalisation came to be in the south walled city. Through a contextual review, the chapter discusses the artistic and design practice that has taken place in Nicosia since 2003 and points out the gaps in knowledge and the contributions from this practice.

Chapter 4, 'Methodology: the case of Phaneromeni Square', forms the first part of the discussion on the methodology of this investigation. The chapter discusses the notion of contested public spaces in the walled city of Nicosia: the social and political conflict and the privatisation of public spaces (research sub-question No. 4). Through a mode of practice-led research, I depict Phaneromeni Square, the selected case study, for this investigation. The chapter presents the interdisciplinary qualitative methods that have been used to research and analyse this site. Through this mode of investigation, the need for active co-existence within the square is identified (research sub-question No. 5).

Chapter 5, 'Methodology: the triggering acts', forms the second part of the discussion on this investigation's methodology. The chapter outlines in detail the methodological process that has been applied by this investigation throughout the case study of Phaneromeni Square, to examine: a) how performance design can

be used outside theatrical orthodoxies and to trigger active co-existence (research sub-question No. 5), and b) the role of the performance designer as social agent within the contested urban realm. This is achieved through a review of this investigation's design experiments, which comprise the scenographic interventions and the practical workshops. Lastly, the chapter presents the toolkit for scenographic interventions, which forms one of the outcomes and contributions of this enquiry.

The conclusion, 'The performance designer as trigger', consolidates my argument for the application of performance design outside of theatrical orthodoxies and into the urban milieu, while the manifesto makes a case for the political role of the performance designer. In this final chapter, I discuss the theory that is constructed around these arguments. Furthermore, this chapter reviews the aim of the thesis, through which the theoretical landscape, the methodological findings and the site-specific findings are presented and examined. This chapter will review and analyse three types of contribution to knowledge: theoretical, methodological and design. I conclude this chapter by discussing the potential for further applications of this research.

# I.

## Literature review: performance design through social art practice in the urban environment

The field of performance design is currently at a turning point. Scenography theorist Rachel Hann ends her book 'Beyond Scenography' (2019) with the following sentences: "I challenge you to be confident in how this porous scenography opens out its critical and practical possibilities. Let's take the opportunity to enact and imagine a renewed scenographic rhetoric of potentiality". Hann (2019) talks about "the scenographic traits that operate within diverse material cultures", going beyond scenography. By this proposition, Hann argues for a wider thinking that attempts to de-centre the practice of scenography away from theatrical orthodoxies. Similarly, Dorita Hannah and Olav Harsløf argue on the potentiality of performance design, laying out "but what happens when design leaves the confines of the stage and begins to wander?" (Hannah and Harsløf, 2008).

In this chapter, I set out to outline the field of study for this practice-based enquiry, and examine the potential of performance design 'wandering' outside of theatrical confines. To make a case for why and how social art practice can enhance the field of performance design – and vice versa – through a mode of synergies, we must first discuss the political nature of the former and the expanding nature of the latter.

In the first section of the chapter, I will focus on the definitions of scenography and how our understanding of the notion has changed over the 20th and 21st centuries. I will then go on to make a case of why I chose to use the term *performance design*, rather than the term *scenography*. The discussion that is generated in the first section of the chapter will help make a case for how social art practice can inform the field of performance design. Lastly, I will go on to highlight the gaps in knowledge. This will set the ground for the discussion that will unfold in the thesis for the political potential of performance design as a

methodology within the urban milieu, and the role of the performance designer as trigger for social change. This potential can be grown by highlighting the agency of space, and the agency of objects and bodies within spaces. Performance design is a field that fundamentally uses, reads, and transforms spaces, while granting agency to objects and bodies in order to tell stories or develop narratives through these transformed spaces.

## 1.1 The expanding field of scenography

Scenography is a contentious concept that is constantly being re-defined and re-evaluated. In the 'Cambridge Dictionary', the term scenography is defined as the art or job of designing and creating theatrical scenery. Pamela Howard (2002) defines scenography as a holistic approach to making theatre from the visual perspective: "scenography is the seamless synthesis of space, text, research, art, actors, directors and spectators that contributes to an original creation" (Howard, 2002, p.130). Scenography is therefore a practice that exists within time and with specific references of duration.

Traditionally, scenography has aimed at the representation of an imaginative, illusionary world within a contained theatrical environment. Scenography scholars Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer, in their book 'Scenography Expanded', point out that the term scenography, deriving from the Greek word *skenographia* (*σκηνογραφία*), can be traced back to Aristotle's Poetics (Aristotle, 1996), which according to Aristotle was the least important aspect – the third actor (*τριταγωνιστής*) – of serious drama (McKinney and Palmer, 2017). Historically, scenography is a mode of practice that serves a narrative and provides context. It acts as a problem-solving practice, which produces practical outcomes to serve a text. Nevertheless, from the beginning of the 20th century, theatre practitioners questioned the assumptions about the superficiality of scenography and demonstrated how the field can make affective and transformative statements.

Although the role of scenography began to change from earlier forms and was no longer associated to the static visual image, the shift in the field and its role within

the dramatic arts has been made more apparent through Hans-Thies Lehmann's (2006) notion of *post-dramatic theatre*. In post-dramatic theatre, the literary text and its history has a secondary role and the narrative is often presented in fragments, which the participating audience has to montage and activate through interacting with the event in order to create a meaning (Szatkowski, 2015). Lehmann refers to several practitioners within post-dramatic theatre who grant agency to the object; the process of an object taking precedence over actors, or even objects performing without the presence of the actor, becomes an opportunity for exploration. McKinney (2015) refers to examples of post-dramatic theatre where the interaction of objects with other scenographic materials, such as light, mist, sounds and water, create "a play with nobody acting". Such examples can be found in the immersive performances created by David Shearing or the London-based theatre group Punchdrunk (Lehmann, 2006; McKinney, 2011) (Figures 4 and 5).



*Figure 4.* David Shearing's 'The Weather CaFE', 2016.
Source. Shearing, n.d.



*Figure 5.* Punchdrunk's The Drowned Man.
Source. Punchdrunk, n.d.

Through their practice, the objects, the scenographic materials and the space in which they are situated, gain an element of force or power, independent of the human body. Departing from Lehmann's notion of post-dramatic theatre, scenographer Thea Brejzek (2011) points out that contemporary scenography is essentially "the making of a space". Brejzek argues that "space is a dynamic network of temporalities, and we are always part of a social, cultural and political construction" and then goes on to conclude that the practice of scenography "can be redefined as the practice of constructing social space in a constant making and re-making of time-space according to an intended and/or evolving narrative" (2011, p.16). At the 2010 Prague Quadrennial for Performance Design and Space Symposium,[2] the curators for the Prague Quadrennial 2011 (PQ11) exhibition described this emerging field as "spaces [created] that are at the same time hybrid, mediated, narrative, and transformative – resulting from a transdisciplinary understanding of space and a distinct awareness of social agency". The artistic outcome acts as agent within the event; it becomes the space, the experience and the actor.

Brejzek (2010) maintains that, with the expansion of scenography, "the scenographer emerges not as the spatial organiser of scripted narratives but as the author of constructed situations and as an agent of interaction and communication". Accordingly, Platform Scenography, a Netherlands-based design group who set out to re-define the notion of scenography through their practice, add to the expanded notion of scenography. The group describe contemporary scenography in their manifesto[3] as the experience between body, object, space and time. They state that scenography is no longer a practice of decoration; it describes processes and allows us to discover how time and space are arranged and to understand the narrative of our own and other bodies in the space, through the materiality and the interactions between objects and bodies. In addition, they

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[2] The Prague Quadrennial forms a series of international exhibitions, symposiums, talks and educational events, aiming to bring the best of design for performance, scenography and theatre architecture to the frontline of cultural activities to be experienced by professional and emerging artists, as well as the general public. https://www.pq.cz/what-is-pq/.

[3] See http://www.platform-scenography.nl/en/manifest/.

prompt us to use scenography as a critical tool to visualise social, organisational and democratic spaces. Lehmann's theory on post-dramatic theory, together with Brejzek's and Platform Scenography's arguments operate as points of departure for my investigation to help examine the role of the performance designer as trigger for active co-existence.

<figure>
process

space
+
time

bodies

interraction
+
communication

process
</figure>
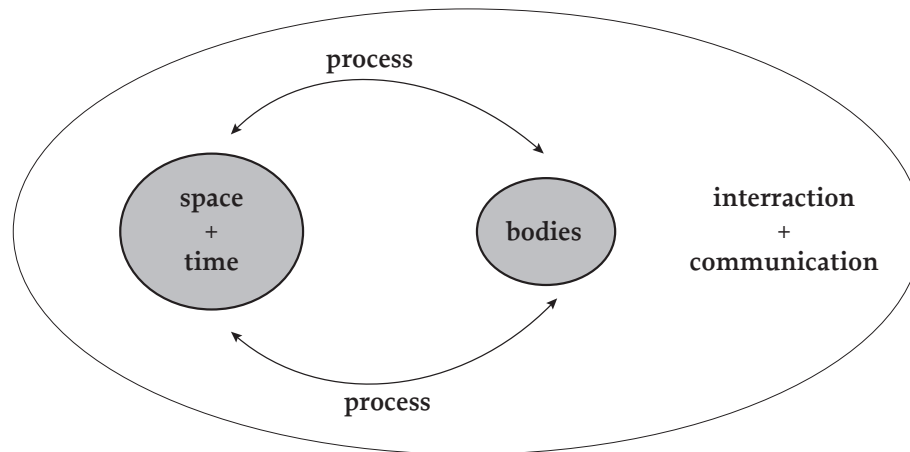
*Figure 6.* The expanded field of performance design. Source. Author's own. 2020.

Platform Scenography's understanding of the use of scenography aligns with my own standpoint: by using methods of performance design as a practice within the urban site, I do not mean simply how the application of *mise en scène* in art cultures is typically in reference to the aesthetics of a piece, the 'stage-like' or 'set-like' dualities of the work. Instead, I am referring to 'stage-like' art installations or the creation of a theatrical set that acts as a form of representation for something in a public space. In this case, I see performance design being used as a methodology within, and informed by, a wider practice of politicised social art practice. The process or methods which allow us to transform a space through objects, movement and the bodily presence, is what I argue transform into an interventional political form. These methods, as shown in Figure 6, will be examined in more detail through the analysis of this investigation's practice-led research in Chapter 4 and the design experiments (research-led practice) in Chapter 5.

At this point, I should clarify why I chose to use the term performance design rather than the term scenography. Over the years, the English language has used

different terminologies to describe the field of scenography: *theatre design*, *stage design*, *set design*, and more recently, following the discussions on the expansion of scenography beyond theatre orthodoxies, *performance design* (Hann, 2019). This term was introduced by Dorita Hannah and Olav Harsløf, following the creation of two newly established university programmes in Performance Design (Massey University in New Zealand and Roskilde University in Denmark). They have suggested that the term is more suitable than scenography as it encompasses a more autonomous interdisciplinary practice that incorporates artists from across the fields of architecture, music, theatre, literature, linguistics, gastronomy, fashion, fine arts, film, media or choreography (Hannah and Harsløf, 2008, p.13).

Hannah and Harsløf define performance design as:

> a loose and inclusive term that asserts the role of artists [and] designers in the conception and realisation of events, as well as their awareness of how design elements not only actively extend the performing body, but also perform without and in spite of the human body. [...] In harnessing the dynamic forces inherent to environments and objects and insisting on a co-creative audience as participatory players, it provides a critical tool to reflect, confront and realign world views. (Hannah and Harsløf, 2008, p.18)

Similarly, Rachel Hann (2019), approaches performance design "as a post-disciplinary home of scenography that equally draws upon the practices of architecture to spatial design, interactive media to social geography". It is on the post-disciplinary and interdisciplinary character of performance design that I chose to build, and in relation to what Pablo Helguera (2011) notes on the transdisciplinary nature of social art practice:

> Artists who wish to work with communities, for whatever reason, can greatly benefit from the knowledge accumulated by various disciplines—such as sociology, education, linguistics, and ethnography—to make

informed decisions about how to engage and construct meaningful exchanges and experiences. (Helguera, 2011)

Through its interdisciplinary character, performance design can enhance the perception of place and shift socio-spatial conditions through a unique dramaturgical approach of creating temporal-spatial environments. The post-disciplinary character allows for the field to expand even further and become more critical. This argument will be addressed again and enhanced in the theoretical frameworks brought forward in Chapter 2 and in the main discussion. Moreover, in Chapters 4 and 5, I will discuss how the interdisciplinary character of social art practice is invoked in order to inform the methodology built through the practice-based investigation. To support the argument made above, I will be drawing on Rachel Hann's approach to the field of scenography. Hann (2019) understands the practice as an act of place orientation and argues that it is a material culture that negotiates the learned and experiential triggers of spatial experience. This comes to support the discussion on the agency of the objects that it is granted through the scenographic practice.  Hann (2019) defines the term *scenographics* as "interventional acts of place orientation" and argues that "the term isolates and affords a particular perspective, or critical framework, that identifies the potentiality of staged architectures". Accordingly, scenographics are an invitation for potential action (Hann, 2019; 2020). This concept will be further analysed in Chapter 5, alongside the interventions that have been designed for the purposes of this enquiry.

### 1.1.1 Paradigms of expanded performance design in the urban realm

To expand on the above statement, and to review the interdisciplinarity of performance design, I will look into two paradigms of practices taken into the urban site: the practice of Mexican group Teatro Ojo, who received the gold medal for Theatre Architecture and Performance Space at the PQ11, and, Tanja Beer, who through an interdisciplinary mode of practice has opened up a dialogue about sustainability in scenography (*ecoscenography*) and has moved her practice beyond the stage to engage with communities threatened by gentrification. In both examples, we are able to see the role of the performance designer blurring with

that of the artist or the activist and, through their work, the audience or the community taking centre stage.

Teatro Ojo reject traditional forms of theatre and see their practice as "theatre without theatre where the stage is the world itself" (Ojo, n.d.; Baugh, 2013). The group's practice has shifted from theatre territories and seeks other ways of deliberating and conceiving the stage. At the very same PQ11 where the curators first spoke of an expanding form of scenography and of the potential for social agency through the practice, Teatro Ojo presented their project '¡No?', which first took place around Mexico City in 2008. ¡No? was formed by a series of performative installations, what they call "poetic interventions", aiming to interrogate or provoke the social and urban realm and to transform the spectators into participants depending on the degree of collaboration. Through ¡No?, the group created a scenographic archaeological site where they questioned the politically-generated individual and collective memory. By this sequence of site-specific actions in the public spaces of Mexico City, the group prompted the participants to rediscover what had or might have happened in these spaces (Baugh, 2013).

Tanja Beer, through her practice of ecoscenography, deploys methods of performance design and seeks for social, political, cultural and ecological possibilities beyond the bounds of the stage. Her most well-known project, 'The Living Stage NYC', explores the potential of her practice contributing to creative placemaking. This project is part of a global initiative which she first conceived in 2013. The initiative combines practices of scenography, horticulture and community engagement and aims to create temporary recyclable, biodegradable, biodiverse and edible performance spaces. The Living Stage NYC transforms urban spaces into accessible, equitable, ecological social gathering places. The project, run together with Lanxing Fu, was motivated by "the need for environmental community arts projects that foster socio-ecological resilience in response to climate change" (Beer, et al., 2018). It took place in Meltzer Park on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Meltzer Park, similar to many other neighbourhoods in New York City, is threatened by gentrification (Beer, et al., 2018). Following a process of

workshops, consultations and discussions run by Beer, during which the concept of The Living Stage NYC was introduced, Beer went on to co-design and construct the living stage, while Fu worked with groups of seniors and children from the community to create an eco-play to activate the space created by this initiative. The project culminated in a two-day festival, at the conclusion of which, the installation was gifted back to the community. The design elements of The Living Stage NYC were constructed over a period of six weeks on the site. This act of making, as characterised by Beer, became a scenographic performance (Beer, et al., 2018).

Both projects discussed above reject the imitation of a reality through performance, in favour of focusing on the performative elements of the reality that is presented to us within the urban fabric. Both practices focus on the audience's experience and the engagement of the spectator, by seeking serendipitous encounters within the urban realm. McKinney and Palmer (2017) suggest that it is in place-based serendipitous work that the performance designer becomes an agent in curating and shaping audience experience. Through an autonomous practice, performance designed thus become authors of their own narratives, or of shared narratives, and by deploying an interdisciplinary mode of practice where scenography blends with co-design and placemaking practices, they instigate engagement and communication with the communities around them. In both paradigms, site specificity is a common element. Theatro Ojo use notions of space and time to highlight and question local histories, while for The Living Stage NYC, the site becomes a vehicle to question gentrification and examine creative placemaking. Beer's ethos on expanded scenography lies in its exciting new processes and aesthetics that embrace new opportunities and advocate for an interdisciplinary and sharing culture. One could correlate this ethos with Manzini's concept of the contemporary designer.

Drawing from these examples, as well as the rationale and ethos of these practices, this investigation seeks to further explore the expanding form of performance design and interrogate how we can broaden the practice further away from its representational, dramatic and theatrical confines. Furthermore, this enquiry

argues that the performance design methodology can be shared with other disciplines seeking to act socially and politically within the urban milieu. To achieve this, I argue that we need to evoke the autonomous and interdisciplinary character of performance design and push the field a step further. Here, I invoke the first research sub-question: "How can performance design be informed by social art practice?".

## 1.2 Social art practice in the urban realm

Sholette, at al., in their book 'Art as Social Action' (2018), much like Helguera (2011), describe social art practice as:

> an emerging, interdisciplinary field of research and practice that pivots on the arts and humanities. [...] Its overall objective is to employ the varied forms offered by the expanded field of contemporary art as a collaborative, collective and participatory social method for bringing about real-world instances of progressive justice, community building, and transformation. (Sholette, et al., 2018)

From these accounts, I understand social art practice as a field that engages with ongoing social and political issues. Reaching beyond solely designing or reshaping public services and policies, social art practice has as its mission to contribute towards and trigger social change. It is not a form of consensual participation and engagement, but rather a radical form that instigates debate. To support this statement, I refer to Oliver Marchart's concept of *conflictual aesthetics:* "If one wants to increase art's politicality one has to forge a passage toward politics. Not toward the representation or mimicry of politics, but towards politics as a social practice" (Marchart, 2019). In other words, we must become agents of agitation in order to produce art that is political. At this point, I recall Deutsche's interruptive model of site specificity. Social art practice within the urban environment is a field tightly embedded in the place in which it is operating, dealing with its social conditions, political context and unique history (Olsen, 2018). Sachs Olsen (2018) asserts that social art has come to be valued as a key creative tool of empowerment in the midst of urban transformation, thus prompting the notion of site specificity to

form a fundamental element within this field, but also raising questions on the relationship and the positioning of the artist within a site, on instrumentalisation, and on autonomy.

Miwon Kwon (2002) adopts Rosalyn Deutsche's (1996) definition of site specificity and interprets it as "an urban aesthetic, or spatial-cultural discourse, which combines ideas about art, architecture and urban design, on the one hand, with theories of the city, social space, and public space, on the other" (Kwon, 2002). Suzanne Lacy (1994) points out that "engaging in site-specific work [...] enables the artist to enter the territory of the other"; in this way the artist is able to become a vessel for experience. Accordingly, a site-specific scenographer delineates a site, and by using an overlay of myth, memory, personal narrative and contemporary detail, frames a place within a local and global context.

However, the notion of site specificity over the last two decades has become problematic. To go forward and develop a coherent argument on the political role of the performance designer, we should also consider these problematics. Deutsche, in her essay about the famous removal of Richard Serra's 'Tilted Arc', described how the model of affirmative site-specific art, often cloaked by social responsibility and community engagement, results in the exclusion of entire social groups (Deutsche, 1998). Furthermore, Kwon calls attention to the political efficacy of the field that has lost its significance due to its appropriation by institutional and market forces. On their part, Berry and Iles (2010), Alison Rooke (2013) and Stephen Pritchard (2016) discuss how we have moved from social art practices that have been evolved out of a radical practice as part of a project for social change, to the instrumental deployment of arts participation in regeneration and creative placemaking at a global scale. Artists are often deployed as - what Berry and Iles (2010) call - "avant-garde gentrifiers". Notions such as site specificity, social engagement and placemaking are being appropriated by local authorities and developers who are looking to 'pacify' deprived neighbourhoods. This discussion prompts me to interrogate the role of the artist within a project for social change. Artists, particularly within site-specific projects, are very often charged with 'parachuting' in and out (Roche, 2008; Bishop, 2012; Rooke, 2013),

often leaving the community with an artwork that is of no use to them. This is a critique resonating with Kwon's (2002) argument on the often paternalistic mode of operation within social art practice. Kwon points out that artists, architects and sponsoring governments tend to decide what is good for the public (Kwon, 2002). Such modes of practice are especially evident when social art practice is deployed for a regeneration project, and artists become "culture-preuners" (Berry, et al., 2010).

Freee Art Collective, through their work, hinder public art's instrumentalisation. They point out that art is something that addresses the public by making it public (Berry and Iles, 2010). In their second edition of 'A Manifesto for Art', which was presented via an open choir, they declare:

> We are against the instrumentalisation of art. The promotion of a region or city and the management of national identity through art always leads to cultural impoverishment. Art is emancipatory only if it is critical. We are against the instrumentalisation of art because we are against both instrumentalisation and affirmative art. If art can be deployed in the process of placemaking it is not critical enough. (Freee Art Collective, 2016)

The collective speak of the act of dissemination through their work, and the life of a message or a slogan that is passed on from one person to another (in the form of a badge, a scarf, a pamphlet or a billboard), in this way linking people through shared beliefs and commitments. Freee assert that their practice is not participatory and highlight the problematic with the notion of participation, which implies complicity. Freee's aim is to provoke thinking and questioning, and to "divide the public" by "dividing opinion" (Biennale, n.d.; Berry and Iles, 2010).

Marchart references Rosalyn Deutsche on this matter who criticises community-art practices "when they seek to create 'society' through social-consensus work and thus establish it as a positive identity in the first place" (Deutsche, 1996, cited in Marchart, 2019). Such consensual practices can often lead to a disguised

gentrification. Therefore, it is imperative to ask: How can we avoid analogous traps, in order to produce a truly political art practice, that is not instrumentalised by such neoliberal tactics? When speaking about social art practice, The Pedagogy Group emphasise the importance of practices that make 'with' rather than 'about'. As they point out:

> approaches that assume one can be interested in a struggle and make work about it differ greatly from being imbricated in that struggle due to one's social position. The former reinforces structures of privilege and exclusion while the later contributes to social transformation. (The Pedagogy Group, 2018, p.75)

This ethos is what the enquiry wished to adopt and incorporate within the performance design methodology.

Jeanne van Heeswijk, who works on long-term community projects, sees herself as a mediator and trigger for change at a neighbourhood and local level (Jeanneworks, n.d.; Heeswijk and Rendon, 2018). In an interview with Zara Stanhope about the role of the artist within a socially engaged project, she says, "we should reclaim words such as local, instrument and autonomy" (Stanhope, 2015). For van Heeswijk, "local" does not necessarily refer to place; it is a condition of belonging or not belonging. A statement that could refer to a community in relation to a project, but also to the artist and their positioning within the project and the community. This leads us to question the purpose for which we become an instrument and for whom. Maybe we can be "self-operating", autonomous instruments (Stanhope, 2015). I argue that the instrument can refer to the skills and methods that are employed and shared within a project, or the medium that the project uses to disseminate a message and provoke dialogue. In the case of this enquiry, and as I will discuss in detail in Chapter 5, the scenographic interventions become a triggering instrument. The toolkit for scenographic interventions is another instrument created to be shared with other practitioners, researchers and within higher education institutions (HEI).

"Autonomous" can be seen as a contested word, with an urgency to be re-claimed, as it is often associated with de-centralised neoliberal tactics (Brown, 2015), going hand-in-hand with creative placemaking actions often disguised as bottom-up social engagement projects. By this I mean that often we see artist-led projects which are backed by creative producers and cultural organisations serving specific agendas. Manzini (2019) asserts that, while the neoliberal ways of thinking and behaving are pervasive, they do not occupy the entire stage. Manzini reminds us that contemporary reality can sometimes exhibit a dynamic social landscape, in which other ways of thinking and acting exist. In this dynamic social landscape, we can find initiatives of creatives who, when faced with a problem, come up with new solutions and put them into practice (Manzini, 2019). This means that, through an autonomous project, the creative is able to break away from dominant ideas and behaviours. This does not necessarily mean that the designer becomes a creative who is withdrawn or closed off. Rather it opens up new possibilities for collaboration, debate, dialogue and new imaginings. This assertion is reminiscent of Beer's The Living Stage NYC project, and the celebration of an interdisciplinary mode of performance design.

## 1.3 What happens when the two fields come together?

This chapter argues that there is a common thread between the two fields, that of interdisciplinarity, post-disciplinarity and site specificity, which all work to bring them together. At the same time, I argue that through the synergy of the two fields – by combining the understanding of spatiality, time and movement from the performance design perspective and the production of objects from the artistic practices – we can truly achieve political action (Bishop, 2004; Kester, 2004).

The first part of this chapter examined the expanding nature of performance design and highlighted the methods that can be used towards a political enhancement of the field. The second part questioned how social art practice can inform the field of performance design when taken into the urban realm. Through an interruptive and agitative mode of practice, I argue that the performance designer can become a social agent. This can be achieved when they cease to be

reliant on the notion of spectatorship and participation, but instead focus on the act of triggering through an agonistic practice. By this process, performance design can contribute to a wider social practice. Furthermore, the field can contribute to the notion of site specificity by bringing forward Hann's understanding of scenographics and place orientation, and the perceived agency of objects, bodies and materialities. These elements provide a means of empowerment and better understanding and response to a site, a locale, a place. How do bodies relate to objects? How do bodies relate to other bodies? How do objects relate to other objects (Hann, 2019)? How does space relate to objects and vice versa? How can we approach performance design as an act of place orientation, through which socio-spatial conditions can be altered? According to Hann, the notion of *orientation* "recognises the multiplicities of phenomena that situate bodies with and within a place". In this way, the designer can create spatial temporalities and prompt social, cultural and political conditions.

In this enquiry and through the creation of the manifesto for the role of the performance designer, I propose that performance design becomes an interventional practice of a temporary and agonistic nature. Hann hints at this with what she called in a recent contribution "justice scenographics", and proposes a shift in thinking for social justice movements. Hann argues that justice scenographics act as provocations on how worlds are encountered (Hann, 2020). I propose that performance design does not seek consensual participants, rather, through the temporary interventions created by this investigation, the practice triggers debate, and the engaging public becomes an actor. Just like Baz Kershaw, who in 2000 urged theatre makers to move their performances outside designated theatrical spaces, in order to bring the spectacle and the spectators "closer to real life" (Kershaw, 2000; McAuley, 2005), the performance designer is invited to move their practice outside the theatrical institution. When applying their knowledge and skills in the urban site, the performance designer may critically engage with the public and move towards a political nature.

Drawing from the discussion that unfolded in this chapter on reclaiming notions and the designer as a trigger and agent of spatial temporalities, I will go on to create a framework of the key concepts that are used within this investigation.

**Performance designer
as trigger**
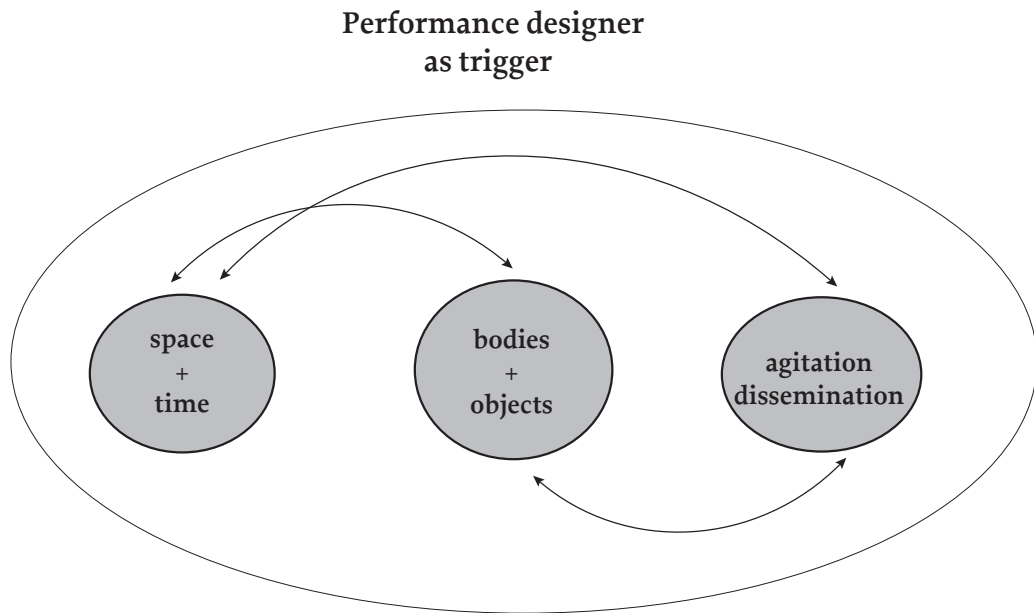


*Figure 7.* The field of performance design as informed by social art practice. Source. Author's own.

**Designer as agent**
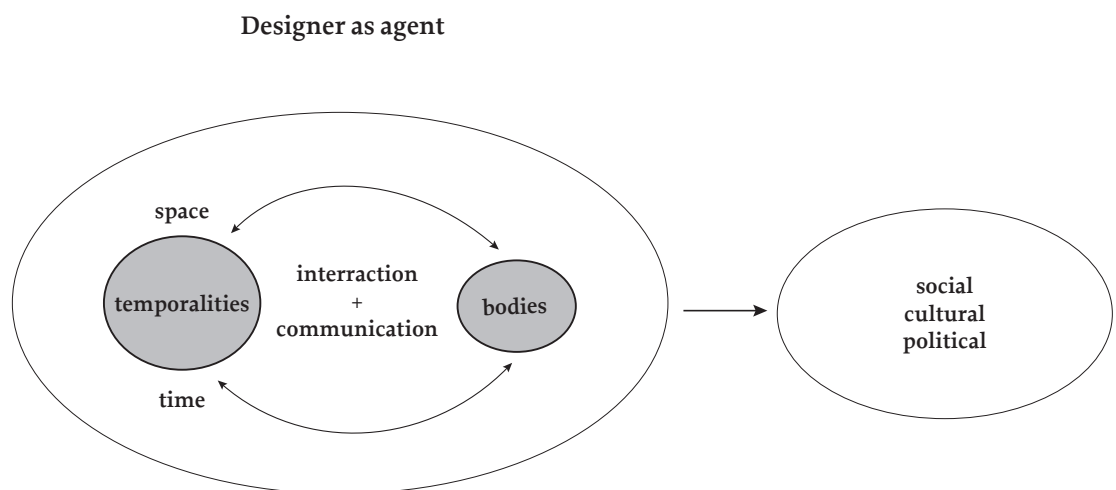


*Figure 8.* Performance design methodology, as proposed by this enquiry. Source. Author's own

**2.**

## Theoretical review: on space, site and conflict

The previous chapter examined social art practice and performance design, and discussed how the former field of study can feed into the latter, when moved outside of theatrical confines and applied as a methodology for social action in the urban site. This chapter addresses research sub-question No. 2 and builds a framework around the key concepts used by this investigation. The chapter draws from the arguments made in the first chapter on the role of the performance designer, site specificity, place orientation, agitation, dissemination and autonomy. To build a set of frameworks that respond to the interdisciplinarity of performance design and to its fundamental principles of materiality, spatiality and time, I employ the approaches of Doreen Massey (1992) and Henri Lefebvre (1974) on space. I frame the notion of space and discuss the concept of a contested public space as it is understood by this enquiry. To substantiate the hypothesis on the need for active co-existence in these models of public space, I will review the concepts of conflict, antagonism and agonistic pluralism. Lastly, I discuss how these theoretical frameworks are applied to support the argument around the enhanced role of the designer.

Massey (1992) points out that the terms *space* and *spatiality* tend to be broadly used, and many authors assume "that their meaning is clear and uncontested". The problem, as Massey highlights through this statement, is that uses of the term space tend to deprive the notion of its political potential. It is this enquiry's assertion that space is political. Thus, I will approach the concept of space through two theoretical strands: a) space as a social product (Lefebvre, 1974), and b) space as a form interrelated with time (Massey, 1992). The second strand will allow us to unfold the concept of spatial temporality introduced in Chapter 1. To do so, I will be looking at Massey's (2005) insight on *space-time*. Both strands will support the premise that space, and more specifically to this investigation, public space, is political.

Lefebvre (1991, p.26) states that "(social) space is a (social) product". Thus, "the space that is produced by the society serves as a tool of thought and action, that in addition to being, forms a means of control and hence of domination, of power" (p.29). For Lefebvre, space is all about power. It is not a container that simply needs to be filled, but itself an active maker of our social relations. Massey (2005), drawing from Lefebvre, comes to add that, while space is constituted through social relations, the social is spatially constructed too. Therefore, Massey argues that, "if society is necessarily constructed spatially, [...] the spatial organisation of society makes a difference to how it works and how it changes" (1992, p.70). This means that space is also implicated in the production of history and time. Hence, space is integral to the possibility of politics.

If we look at space as a 'moment' crossing with configured social relations, it means that we cannot see it as static. Space is not a 'flat' surface; the social relations that create it are themselves dynamic by their very nature. Massey (1992; 2005) maintains that space as happenstance has powers that can affect subsequent events. Spatial form can alter the future course of the histories that have produced it. Accordingly, time and space are inseparable, "they have a joint constitution through interrelations between phenomena" (1992, p.80). Massey later added, "if space-time is relational then the 'nature' of the phenomenon is itself a product of its spatio-temporal locality (meaning: position within an articulation of interrelations) and also where the articulation of interrelations 'produces' the space" (Massey, 2001).

It is these spatio-temporal localities that I wish to draw on: the events and moments interlaced from ongoing stories, which lead us to understand space as the dimension of multiplicities. The investigation will draw from this notion of multiplicities to make a case for active co-existence within contested public spaces. In section 2.1, I will speak in more detail about the notion of multiplicities and heterogeneity in relation to co-existences.

Firstly, we must look at the political nature of the public space in relation to the above concept. Lefebvre (1991) has come up with a conceptual triad to describe

space: a) *spatial practice*, b) *representations of space*, and c) *representational spaces*. According to Lefebvre, spatial practice implies the production and reproduction of social spaces. Representations of space refer to planned, controlled and ordered spaces, the spaces that are conceived by engineers, architects and bankers. And representational spaces are the imagined, appropriated, lived and used spaces (Lefebvre, 1991; Stanek, 2011). Whilst defining the notion of public space, Don Mitchell (1995) points out that it "often originates as representation of space, as for example a square, a monumental plaza, a public park, or a pedestrian shopping district". But, Mitchell indicates, as people use these spaces, they also become representational spaces. This could also apply with Deutsche's two models of site specificity: the affirmative model enforcing the representation of spaces, and the interruptive model, allowing for spatial practices to flourish and for representational spaces to form. To allow such actions, we must assure that the urban public spaces are indeed truly public. Anna Minton (2006) asserts that "public space is very difficult to define, not least because very few spaces and places are, or ever have been, truly public". While discussing the significance of the development of public spaces, Ali Mandanipour (1999; 2003; 2019) notes that public spaces are expected to be accessible to everyone; they are the spaces where strangers and citizens can enter with minimal restrictions. Mandanipour (1999) asserts that "without public space the spatial movement across the city becomes limited and subject to negotiation". Sharon Zukin (1995) believes that public spaces are the primary site of public culture and highlights their importance. They are the places where strangers meet, but they also constitute an arena for continual negotiation of the boundaries and markers of human society. Public spaces constitute the social and political arena for different groups to become visible and heard, thus essential to the functioning of democracy.

The issue is that over the last two decades we see an increasing number of privatised public spaces that are not accessible to all. For the last decade, most of the 'public places' that have been built in our cities, are actually private, based on shopping, coffee shop culture, finance centres and apartments, with clear rules about who is, or is not, allowed in and what they can do there (Minton, 2009). A

phenomenon described as "pacification by cappuccino", or "domestication by cappuccino" (Zukin, 1995; Atkinson, 2001); that is, when urban public spaces are recaptured by the middle class at the expense of other users. Hackworth and Smith (2001) linked this process to "state-led" or "government-sponsored gentrification", which, in line with the concept of *neoliberal urbanism*, pays a great deal of attention to the role of local government in furthering the interests of local elites and developers (Aalbers, 2018). This phenomenon centres on the role of the local authority as a driving force of the socio-spatial restructuring of the city. The availability of public space is under threat, and by overlooking the need for such spaces, where democratic performance can be exercised, we run the risk of undermining some important conditions of democracy in the modern world (Parkinson, 2012). The privatisation of public space entails increasing both alienation of people from the possibilities of inherent social interactions, as well as control by powerful economic and social actors over the production and use of space (Mitchell, 1995). Privatisation reinforces existing patterns of homogenisation and segregation, and we lose the multiplicities that produce the social space.

## 2.1 On multiplicities and the concept of active co-existence

This enquiry identifies the need for active co-existence in order to maintain the multiplicities within the urban milieu and preserve social roles, opinions and positions. This section will discuss the theory that supports the new notion of *active co-existence* and how I arrived through this investigation at the use of the specific term. This concept will be further discussed in relation to this investigation's site of research in the chapters to follow.

Urban public spaces have customarily been unrestricted, multipurpose spaces, allowing access to everyone; they have been places where citizens can interact. Public spaces or civic spaces cannot be static (Massey, 2005; Cumberlidge, et al., 2007); they must be able to make room for debate, exchange and multiplicity. Therefore, public spaces become terrains for active co-existence between citizens. The term *co-existence* is defined as the state of existing together, usually peacefully

(Cumberlidge, et al., 2007). Co-existence may well be passive, a basic form of urban sociation, that is, the process of interaction within the urban environment, which may appear as dissociation (Tonkiss, 2005), that allows us simply to co-exist without interaction with the large number of other citizens using or passing through the same space as us. This thesis employs the term active co-existence to examine ways that the contested public spaces within the urban milieu can allow different forms of interaction, happenstance, debate and event conflict between different actors, while promoting multiplicities.

I briefly define the term active co-existence as the accumulation and agonistic interaction of citizens in public spaces, hence the use of 'active'. Cities allow for multiplicities, interactions and connection between people. The notion of active co-existence draws from Chantal Mouffe's theories on the political and her theory of agonism. Mouffe (2013) describes *the political* as a dimension of antagonism that can take different forms and emerge in diverse social relations. This dimension, according to Mouffe, can never be eliminated. The notion of the political can allow us to understand the agonistic approach to the public space, through which I argue that active co-existence can be achieved. Following the agonistic approach, the public space is where "conflicting points of view are confronted without any possibility of a final reconciliation" (Mouffe, 2013, p.92). Public spaces allow plurality, and the agonistic confrontation takes place within an array of discursive fields. Accordingly, Massey (2005) argues that by co-existence we can envision the entanglements and configurations of multiple trajectories and multiple histories. I argue that through active co-existence, we are able to achieve a multiplicity of social interactions within the public space, where social differences and diverse power relations are acted out.

This enquiry argues that there is a close connection between the creation of representational spaces (Stanek, 2011) and active co-existence, and how through the former we can accommodate the latter. The thesis advocates that we must consider the creation of places that do not follow the current problematic ideology of public space and creative placemaking, that is, when it is co-opted by

the ones who seek to create polished, secured spaces that exclude 'undesirable' people (Belina, 2011/12; Griffiths, 2018).

## 2.2 Conceptual frameworks and research methods

Through this chapter I have built conceptual frameworks deriving from theories on space, neo-Marxism and agonistic pluralism. These frameworks will be used to structure the research methods used by this practice-based investigation.

### 2.2.1 Space-time and spatial temporalities

The notion that space is a form which is not flat but instead constantly moving and changing, and therefore, as argued by Massey (2005), interrelated with time, will allow this investigation to examine the site of research, that is, Phaneromeni Square, within the south walled city of Nicosia, as a living organism, constantly changing through movement, history and time. These elements are fed into the historical and spatial analysis, and understanding of the complexity of the square. They are used to build the criteria for the scripts prepared for the photo-documentation of the square, which forms part of the qualitative analysis of this case study. Moreover, this framework will be used to enrich the notion of the role of the performance designer, as described by Hannah and Harsløf (2008) and Hann (2019) in Chapter 1. It will also enhance our understanding of the field when used outside of theatrical confines and as a methodology within the contested urban site.

The notion of the *spatio-temporal event* will help approach and reclaim the notion of *site specificity*. Drawing from the concept of *spatial temporalities*, as events originating from stories, which in turn contribute to the perception of space as a dimension of multiplicities, I will develop the scenographic interventions, which are applied as design experiments for this practice-based enquiry. This framework will constitute the basis for the criteria that will be used to analyse the outcomes from each scenographic intervention. These outcomes will subsequently be fed into the iterative process of the investigation.

### 2.2.2 Lefebvre's social space

Lefebvre (1991) asserts that space, as conceived from a social point, has a dual nature. This dual nature refers to how, on the one hand, each person relates to and situates themselves in space and by extent, relates to the objects within the space. On the other hand, it refers to how space serves a "intermediary or mediating role". Meaning, it offers sequences, an array of objects and networks of bodies.

Lefebvre's theory will support the statement that by addressing the agencies of objects, bodies, movement and space, within site specificity, we can reinforce the political contribution of performance design. This conceptual groundwork will be used to build an analytical framework around the notion of agencies. This framework will in turn be used to examine the site of research and analyse the outcomes from the design experiments.

### 2.2.3 Pacification by cappuccino

The concepts on *privatisation* and *domestication* of public space, as discussed in this chapter, will be brought forward and translated into a research tool to examine the process of privatisation in Phaneromeni Square. These notions will allow this investigation to understand the different types of privatised public spaces: a) privately owned public spaces, or POPs, and b) public spaces, that have become privatised following a course of a state-led gentrification in the area.[4]

### 2.2.4 Agonistic practices, active co-existence and actors

This framework, drawing from Mouffe's notions of *agonism* and *the political*, brings together the agonistic and antagonistic methodologies within social art practice, as discussed in Chapter 1, active co-existence and the notion of *actors*. By implementing this framework into the methodology that is developed, this practice-based enquiry expands through identifying the need for and triggering active co-existence.

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[4] This enquiry's case study would fit into the second category as it is a public space on the way to privatisation, followed by a course of state-led gentrification.

Accordingly, this investigation chooses to have actors rather than participants. The word 'actor' derives from the Latin verb *agere*, which means to do or to act. By choosing this word, this investigation aims to develop a different relationship with the public, other than that of creator–spectator. This investigation sees the public as one that is active.

These conceptual frameworks, as presented in this chapter, act as key guidelines for the theoretical and practice-based contributions of this investigation, and inform my research methods.

**3.**

## The site of research: on Nicosia

Having established the fields of study in the first chapter and discussed the potential of the political role of performance design through an interruptive, agitational and agonistic mode of social art practice, supported by the theoretical frameworks built in Chapter 2, we must now examine the contested nature of the south walled city of Nicosia.

Through a historical account, this chapter will introduce the site of research and identify the political and social conflicts linked to the city in the 20th century. The second section of this chapter will discuss the effects of Nicosia's division on the artistic and design practices of the island. Lastly, the chapter will look at the relation between the division, the Buffer Zone and the regeneration and gentrification of the walled city. Through the first two sections, I will examine the notion of the contested public space in relation to the context of Nicosia: a) its division due to the ethno-national matter, and b) the regeneration that followed.

Nicosia is the capital of the Republic of Cyprus and is situated almost in the centre of the island. Rich in history, the city has undergone four different occupations following that of the Byzantine Empire (Frankish, Venetian, Ottoman, and the British) (Pantelidou, et al., 2002). The initial fortifications were built by the Lusignan occupants of the island (1191-1489) during the Crusades, and were subsequently replaced by the Venetian walls, or 'Medieval walls' in 1567, during the Venetian rule in Cyprus (Keshishian, 1978). The new walls were built in order to protect the island from the Ottoman threat. The *walled city* thus refers to the area of Nicosia within the Venetian walls that still stand and are a UNESCO landmark.

At present, Nicosia is the last divided capital of Europe. The unoccupied or south side of the walled city of Nicosia now forms the city centre and is also referred to as Old Nicosia, in everyday conversations. The term *unoccupied* refers to any area of the island which has not been under the Turkish troops' occupation since 1974

(Bakshi, 2011). For the purposes of this research document, I will only refer to each side geographically: north and south. (Figure, 9).
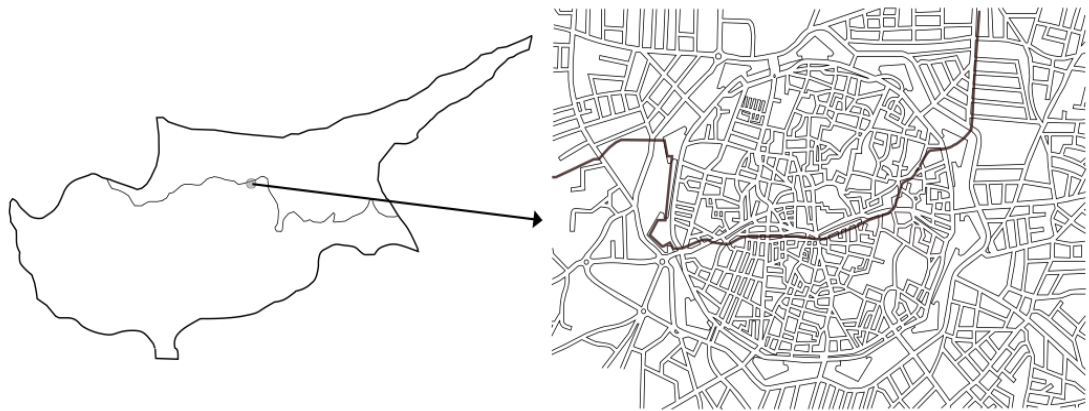


*Figure 9.* Diagram of Nicosia's position on a map showing the Buffer Zone. Source. Author's own.

### 3.1 The historical context of the walled city of Nicosia

In 1570, following a period of Venetian rule, Cyprus fell under Ottoman occupation, which lasted for three centuries (1570-1878). Under Ottoman rule, many residents of the island chose to follow the Muslim faith, due to the privileges that they could earn from the governing body. The "Muslimisation" (Kyrris, 1985) of a number of Cypriots lead to the first ethnic distinction in the island, and the exclusion of the former from the Hellenic (Greek Orthodox) community. This distinction split the populace into the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot communities (Pantelidou, et al., 2002). Following the establishment of the two communities, a Greek-Cypriot and a Turkish-Cypriot residential quarter, in the south and north of Nicosia respectively, were formed; a mixed commercial zone in the centre of the city joined the two quarters. The Greek Orthodox Church saw its jurisdiction and hierarchy restored to its status pre-Lusignan rule. Soon after, the Greek Orthodox Church became the "unchallenged spokesman in the political, social, educational and religious affairs of the Greek-Cypriot community" (Coufoudakis, 1976, p.31). To an extent, the Greek Orthodox Church still holds this power in Cyprus, frequently intervening and expressing an opinion in political decisions. I will return to this discussion in Chapter 4, when I review notions of power and agency, specifically, spatial agency

and the agency of objects within the investigation's case study, Phaneromeni Square.

By the beginning of British rule in 1878, and due to the emphasis placed on issues around Cypriot ethnicity, the Church leaders had a monopoly on decision-making on behalf of over three-quarters of the population. This development also created the early claims for *enosis* – the Greek word for unification – with Greece. At the same time, the Young Turk Revolution, which took place in 1908, inspired a nationalistic drive in Turkish-Cypriots, who slowly became more organised. The British rulers were quick to use the shifting nationalistic aspirations of the two communities to their advantage, using the 'divide and conquer' technique to undermine social relations on the island (Calame and Charlesworth, 2009). It is important to note that, until the 1950s, incidents of inter-communal conflict and violence were relatively minor, but "from the early 1950s until 1974, influential foreign diplomats used a powerful blend of antipathy, indifference and manipulation to counteract the Cypriots' natural affinity for tolerance and contributed to the provocation of interethnic rivalry" (Calame and Charlesworth, 2009). In 1956, clashes between the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots kicked off in Nicosia when a Turkish-Cypriot police officer was killed by Greek-Cypriot paramilitary forces (EOKA);[5] as a result, the British began installing barricades in order to separate the two communities. The barricades followed Ermou Street, the commercial artery running east to west through the centre of the old city. This division was known as the Mason-Dixon Line, a temporary, semi-official boundary dividing Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots as both civil enmity (the EOKA guerrilla war) and inter-communal violence set in (Calame and Charlesworth, 2009).

In December 1963, the inter-communal conflict escalated, and Major General Young, the head of Colonial Forces in Cyprus, drew on the map with a green

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[5] In 1955, the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA), a Greek-Cypriot anti-colonial movement was formed and in April 1955 a guerrilla war against the British colony commenced, which lasted until 1959 (Pantelidou, et al., 2002).

pencil, a division line across the walled city – the Green Line – which remains to this day. The 'troubles' (*fasaries* in Greek) – as civilians call the inter-communal conflicts – continued into 1964, prompting and the UN Security Council to instal a peace force on the island. Nevertheless, the inter-communal conflicts continued and intensified in 1967, with what is known as the 'Kofinou crisis', a series of serious episodes between the Greek-Cypriot military forces and Turkish-Cypriot paramilitary forces (Kyrris, 1985; Pantelidou and Hadjicosti, 2002). At the same time, clashes occurred between left-wing and right-wing Greek-Cypriots – a conflict that continues to this day, only on a much smaller scale – and in 1971, EOKA B, an illegal paramilitary organisation, was created by members of the extreme right-wing with the aim to continue the "fight for union [with Greece] until the end" (Pantelidou and Hadjicosti, 2002, p.229). On 15th of July 1974, a coup took place in Nicosia, organised by the Greek Junta and EOKA B, aiming to overthrow the President, Makarios III. Five days later, the Turkish troops invaded Cyprus under the claim of protecting the Turkish-Cypriot population and gained control of 37% of the northern part of the island. Since 1974, Nicosia and the rest of the island have been divided. The UN Buffer Zone, a no-man's land, is guarded by Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot troops who patrol the ceasefire line. Prior to 2003 – when the first checkpoint opened – only a few residents, mainly diplomats, were ever able to cross over from either side.

Since 1963 and the city's division, the state of the walled city of Nicosia has not only changed physically, but also socially. Following the troubles in 1963, the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot quarters became more evident and the Greek-Cypriot commercial centre moved to Ledra Street, Phaneromeni Square and Onasagorou Street. Architect and researcher Anita Bakshi, quotes Attalides: "The spaces, uses and population of the old city have largely been defined by its division. Whereas prior to the 1950s almost everyone resided within the walls, today few Cypriots live in the old city" (Attalides, 1981, cited in Bakshi 2012).

Following the invasion by Turkish troops in 1974, the south side of Old Nicosia became what urban planner Matthew Carmona calls a "scary space" for the

majority of Greek–Cypriots: an area where crime or conflict or even the fear of crime and conflict dominate the perceptions of place, and where strategies for the prevention of conflict impact on the freedom with which space is used and enjoyed (Carmona, 2010). The fear, the trauma and the memory of conflict and war drove most of the residents away from the south side of the walled city. The generation who experienced the invasion and prior to that, the inter-communal violence, was afraid of going near the Green Line and being 'closer' to the Turkish army. This generation passed on its memories and fear to the next generation, who also developed a fear of proximity to the Green Line. As a result, the old city became a marginal area; from a city centre, it became a periphery. Gradually, the walled city of Nicosia fell into decay and as of the 90s, home to a mostly immigrant population and the red-light district. In Bakshi's collection of interviews from 2010, we can see that among young Greek-Cypriots, the fear of migrants was evident. They noted that the south side of the old city was not safe for women to be alone at night and most avoided the area, especially on Sundays where migrant workers could be found enjoying their day off (Bakshi, 2013). During an interview that I conducted in the initial stages of this enquiry with a young resident of Phaneromeni Square, she said that when she first moved to the area, her mother would call her every two days to see if she was still alive "in that area she chose to move with all the immigrants and next to the Turks" (Semi-structured interview with Marina Mandri, 2015).

In 1981, in an effort to bring life back to the walled city of Nicosia, a multidisciplinary, bi-communal team was formed to prepare a common planning strategy for Nicosia. This action was part of the Nicosia Master Plan (NMP), which was the first bi-communal action in Cyprus and was funded by the UNDP. In 1991, one of the NMP actions was to pedestrianise the main arteries of the walled city of Nicosia. This included Ledra Street, Onasagorou Street and Phaneromeni Square, in the south part. The NMP is an ongoing project and has played a key role in the regeneration of the south walled city.

## 3.2 Artistic practices in the south walled city of Nicosia

The physical body of the city of Nicosia, with the division line and military presence still in place, has become a constant reminder of conflict in the everyday urban milieu. This has created a fertile ground for artists, designers and architects, and has, to some level, sensationalised the concept of the Buffer Zone in Nicosia. When speaking on the perils of gentrification in divided cities, social art practitioner and academic Evanthia Tselika writes:

> Ethno-nationally divided cities have a legacy in dealing with conflict, urban segregation, and in using the arts to challenge separation and facilitate contact. Study of divided cities and their use of art for relationship building not only reveals how they are successful in the early stages of the desegregation process but also points to how this can lead to gentrification as large corporations move into the desegregated regenerated areas. It is important, therefore, to question the use of art as a bandage, as a social glue that can facilitate cohesion between conflicted social groups. (Tselika, 2018)

Expanding on Tselika's argument on the role of social art in ethno-nationally divided cities, I wish to discuss the role and positioning of the artist when working in contested sites such as Nicosia. Since the division of the island, the Buffer Zone has offered a fertile ground for social art practice in the island, shifting away from mnemonic public art and the commodification of the object, towards the use of participatory forms and anthropological tools (Pellapaisiotis, 2014). In 2003, checkpoints were opened by the governing body in the north of the island, which allowed passage from one side of the island to the other. This action created an opportunity for dialogue and exchange, and for a new artistic practice to develop within the island. The two communities, after almost three decades, were able to meet face-to-face, build collaborations and work together on common projects (Pellapaisiotis, 2014). The first bi-communal project that took place following the opening of the checkpoints, was 'Leaps of Faith' in 2005 (Gregos and Kosova, n.d.; Zincir, 2005). The project aimed to activate public spaces and buildings in Nicosia.

The curators' idea was to make the exhibition "spill out onto both sides of the divided city" (Pellapaisiotis, 2014), and reinforce communication and exchange. Leaps of Faith tackled the ethno-national matter, but at the same time focused on other socio-political issues that had been sidelined because of the division: gender and class issues, minority rights, de-regulated urban expansion, as well as the economic and sexual exploitation of immigrants (Koroxenides, 2015).

Since that first bi-communal artistic project in 2005, there have been many creative initiatives, both local and international, that directed their focus on the Buffer Zone and on the ethno-national matter, including projects such as 'Manifesta 06'. In 2010, Tselika, in collaboration with creative Demetris Taliotis, produced 'Public Works Chora', a project that formed part of Tselika's practice-based research on conflict transformation art. Public Works Chora examined Nicosia as a divided city and focused on the landscape of the Old City that is characterised by the ethno-national separation. The project aimed at creating points of contact that looked at the city through artistic public statements and consisted of a series of happenings that took place in the south part of Old Nicosia. In 2011, a contemporary art exhibition took place at the Ledra/Lokmaci crossing.[6] The project dealt with the abandoned Nicosia Airport, which is located in the Buffer Zone and can only be accessed by UN forces. The Nicosia Airport has been neglected and empty since 1974. The artists that took part in the exhibition were from both communities (Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot). The artists were invited to engage with themes that provided an insight into the spatial and social aspects of the Nicosia Airport: a site that Cypriots are not allowed to enter. Through this exhibition, the curators aimed to challenge not only the official narratives of the two communities, but also those of the UN. It was during this exhibition that the 'Occupy the Buffer Zone' movement was born (Tselika, 2019).[7]

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[6] In April 2008, the street reopened, becoming the sixth crossing point on the island. See https://www.cy.undp.org/content/cyprus/en/home/operations/projects/partnershipforthefuture/upgrading-of-local-and-urban-infrastructure---phase-ii/opening-of-ledra-lokmaci-crossing.html.

[7] Occupy the Buffer Zone was a protest movement that began on 15 October 2011 by Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot activists at the Ledra/Lokmacı checkpoint, in Nicosia.

More recently, in 2019, 'EMERGENCE', a four-year project funded by the Creative Europe programme and part of the Prague Quadrennial, took place in the walled city of Nicosia. With performance design as a starting point, and by using performance, EMERGENCE explores the role of local and global memory in shaping cultural understanding and interpreting heritage in different areas across Europe. The residency in Cyprus focused on the Buffer Zone and on notions of trauma and passed-on memories.

This section reviews the artistic practice and curatorial projects that have been developed in Nicosia since 2003. What I find interesting, is that since Leaps of Faith, which questioned the effects of the division on the socio-political state of Nicosia, art and design practices focusing on the urban milieu of the walled city have overwhelmingly concentrated on the ethno-national matter and on peace-building dialogue. While this provides a key contribution to the island's cultural activity and to the academic discussion of social art practice and conflict transformation art, I assert, as I did in the Introduction, that it overshadows other contemporary socio-political issues linked to the urban fabric of Nicosia. And although one is entangled with the other, I argue that we should also be watchful of practices that may encourage the sensationalisation of the Buffer Zone or those that treat the Buffer Zone as a museum. For this, I argue the importance of the role of the artist and their positioning in relation to a site. We must be wary of practices that may lead us towards an instrumentalised creative placemaking of that area. Such worries are also expressed by the Buffer Fringe Festival. In their 2019 open call, they specifically stated: "We also invite artists to consider how culture (culture of violence, culture of peace, etc.) has been a) colonialised on the island, and b) sensationalised world-wide, and anticipate that they shape their proposals free of those syndromes" (Home for Cooperation, 2019). This festival was developed by the Home for Cooperation[8] team in 2014, with the idea of providing a platform to question sensitive topics, and express ideas in new and

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[8] The Home for Cooperation is a community centre located in the Nicosia Buffer Zone and is home to six NGOs.

creative ways. The festival aims to allow the people to engage with one another regardless of the dominant historical narratives, ideologies or identities that are very much politicised and often divisive for the peoples of Cyprus.

Similarly, '*U-A-W*' (Urban-A-Where) was initiated by architect and academic Socrates Stratis in 2012. The project aimed to contribute towards the construction of an active urban society and reclaim the commons. It looked at three themes: a) mobility as agent for urban mixity, b) nature in urban environments, and c) sharing educational infrastructures. U-A-W, which had an interdisciplinary character, was carried out through five different types of activities (temporal events, alternative navigations, urban games, XS installations, and public presentations and lectures), in which teams of architects, visual artists and urbanists from Cyprus and other European countries assisted and participated (Stratis, 2013). Although some of the activities took place in the south walled city of Nicosia, the area was not the main objective of the project. U-A-W stands out as one of the few autonomous, local, creative projects that looked at the social and urban fabric of Nicosia and did not focus singularly on the ethno-national matter.

Pellapaisiotis (2014), when discussing the role of art around the Buffer Zone, asks: "should artists and curators seek new ways and forms by which our relationship to place, identity and history is thought, expressed and recorded?". Drawing from Leaps of Faith, U-A-W and the Buffer Fringe Festival on their approach towards the entanglement of the socio-political issues that arise within the urban fabric of Nicosia and the ethno-national matter, and refraining from instrumentalised practices, I argue that we should direct our practices more carefully towards the ever-developing south walled city of Nicosia. Over a span of ten years, the area has transformed from a periphery to an animated city centre. And therefore, we should also question our positioning and role, as creatives, within the contested fabric of Nicosia. Thus, I assert that when approaching Nicosia as a site of research, or a site of practice, we should employ Massey's notion of the spatio-temporal event, as discussed in Chapter 2.

### 3.3 The rediscovered and gentrified south walled city

> *In March 2016, I attended a presentation by the (now re-elected) Mayor of Nicosia,*
> *Constantinos Yiorkadjis on the future of the Buffer Zone. At the time, there was a*
> *resurgence of hope for the reunification of the island and therefore of the divided city.*
> *During the presentation, the Mayor focused on the city council's plans for the*
> *regeneration and [set-like] restoration of the area along the green line. During the*
> *Q&A, I naively asked him "what will the city council do in order to bring back to life*
> *to the Buffer Zone but prevent gentrification?". The Mayor smiled and simply replied*
> *"But what is defined as gentrification?".* (Author reflection).

With the opening of the central checkpoint at Ledra Street in 2008, things began
to change, and the south side of the walled city came back to life, with tourists
more frequently visiting the area and crossing from one side of the Green Line to
the other (Bakshi, 2013). Since 2011, new restaurants, coffee shops and bars have
emerged and Nicosians have begun to frequent the medieval city in large
numbers. In 2012, journalist George Kakouris reflected on the new changes in the
south side of the old city pointing out that it was being gentrified.

> What is happening in Old Nicosia? It may be early to call it something and
> it may be the right time to try and understand it. [...] What has currently
> begun to happen in the old city, the explosion of restaurants on
> Onasagorou Street and – in short order – the opening up of bars, could be
> very well be called gentrification.[9] (Kakouris, 2012)

These developments brought a new ambience to the walled city. Within the last
decade, the south side of the old city has been transformed from a neglected, semi-
derelict district into a hip part of the capital, to spend leisure time and to reside in.
By 2013, the two main arteries of the south walled city, Ledras and Onasagorou,
had developed and regenerated to a degree that they resembled an open-air mall.
As part of the Nicosia Master Plan (NMP), a significant part of the streets and
building facades had been restored. During that time, the sense that two separate

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[9] Translation by author. Original in Greek.

worlds were being shaped was growing; the residents and the shopkeepers who had been there for a long time, as well as the area regulars, began to feel that they were being squeezed out by the new leisure culture. As a response, an NGO called Awake Within the Walls was formed by local residents, aiming to improve the quality of life in their neighbourhoods. A semi-structured interview that I conducted with the Vice President of the NGO, during the initial stages of this investigation, revealed a number of issues faced by the residents: visitors were often unaware of the fact that many people actually lived in the old city, and according to her this became a main reason for their lack of respect towards the area (Interview with Efthymia Alphas, 2012). Simultaneously, the new establishments like coffee shops and restaurants began to encroach on and take over the public spaces (for example, by putting out chairs and tables on pedestrian arteries, pavements and squares) in an effort to attract more customers and increase their profits.

Not long after these new businesses set up in Old Nicosia, property values increased, pushing out the artists, small businesses and migrant residents (Tselika, 2018). Christodoulides (2014) points out that the action of resisting the ethno-national division through urban planning and architectural rehabilitation has resulted in the historical part of south Nicosia being given away to private businesses. Although the walled city of Nicosia has been under the NMP for over three decades, very few public spaces have been created or redeveloped specifically for public use. The worry that the city centre has been regenerated in a neoliberal manner to serve specific individuals and large corporations, to the detriment of residents' needs, thus  creating a set-like area for people to visit and not reside in, is growing (Hadjidemetriou, 2020).

Phaneromeni Square, the case study chosen for this research, which will be analysed in detail in Chapter 4, constitutes a typical example of a regenerated, set-like public space. Most of the square's surface is taken up by coffee shop chairs and tables and the benches that used to be there have been removed upon request of the coffee shop owners so that they can spread their own furniture (Figure 10). As a result, the public space of the square has shrunk significantly.

*Figure 10.* Phaneromeni Square, following
the opening of coffee shops and bars in the area.
Source. Author's own, August 2014

## 3.4 Active co-existence in the context of Nicosia

In this chapter, I examine the historical and political context of Nicosia and discuss the affects that the division of the city and the presence of the Buffer Zone have had in the development of the area, and on the artistic practice of the island. The socio-political complexity of Nicosia, caused by the ethno-national conflict, is what prompted me to argue that we should address the city as a spatio-temporal event. The changes that took place and continue taking place, are happening within and through history.

In section 3.2, I argue that it is important to re-examine the role and positioning of the artist within site-specific projects, especially in complex environments, like the walled city of Nicosia. To do so, I assert that we should incorporate into our practices the notion of active co-existence, as introduced in Chapter 2. At the same

time, taking in consideration the spatio-temporal event that is Nicosia, we can begin to address active co-existence as a growing, living organism that not only considers co-existences of bodies within space, but also of the elements that constitute the spatio-temporal event. Therefore, I examine: How does the Buffer Zone actively co-exist with the regenerated streets of Ledra and Onasagorou, or Phaneromeni Square? And how do the different histories actively co-exist with the space? In the following chapter, I will examine Phaneromeni Square, the site of research. Through a discussion on the practice-led research that has been conducted as part of this enquiry, I will expand on the above argument.

**4.**

## Methodology: the case study of Phaneromeni Square

*In autumn of 2011, during the Mayoral pre-election campaign, the future Mayor Constantinos Yiorkadjis gave an interview to a local newspaper about his vision should he win.[10] One of his main campaign arguments was about the old town of Nicosia; he spoke about his plans to transform the walled city into a "clean and friendly place". Fast-forward to 2012, when I began thinking about this research; Phaneromeni Square looked and felt completely different to how it appears in the present day. The process of gentrification in the area was in its early stages. The square was a hot topic in the everyday life of Nicosia and mentioned weekly in mass media.* (Author reflection)

The previous chapter discussed the notion of the contested city, and the complexities of artistic practices within such sites. In this chapter, I will concentrate on the case study of this enquiry and address research sub-question No. 4, through which I will discuss the complexity of a contested public space within the contested city. Furthermore, through a discussion on the practice-led research methods that have been deployed by this investigation, I will examine the role of the performance designer, and their position within a contested site.

In the previous chapter, I spoke about the gentrifying process that began in the walled city around 2011. The square was at the epicentre of this process, exhibiting the characteristics of a "state-led" or "government-sponsored" gentrification (Aalbers, 2018). While Phaneromeni Square shares many characteristics with neoliberalised public spaces found across the globe (Minton, 2009; Springer, 2010) and has been filled with coffee shops in an effort to be "pacified by cappuccino" (Zukin, 1995), like the rest of Old Nicosia, it remains a space that is more complex than other Western privatised public spaces. The

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[10] Constantinos Yiorkadjis was elected Mayor of Nicosia in December 2011 and re-elected for a second term in 2016. (Municipality, n.d.)

complexity that this space displays acted as the main criterion for the choice of case study.

Phaneromeni is a small square situated within the medieval walls of Nicosia, linking Ledras Street and Onasagorou Street, the two main arteries of the south walled city (Figure 11). It has been named after the adjacent church, which was built in 1872 on the ruins of an ancient Greek Orthodox nunnery. Panayia Phaneromeni is the largest Greek Orthodox church within the city walls. The church owns shops, offices and other buildings in the area, with the most important being the extensive block of shops and offices on Ledras, Liperti, Phaneromeni and Nicocleous streets (Keshishian, 1978). To this day, the church holds substantial power within the area and may influence decisions taken by the local authority. The square is part of the intricate urban milieu of Nicosia, with a strong socio-political history linked to the ethno-national conflict in Cyprus. This is partly due to its unique position within the divided city of Nicosia and its proximity to the Buffer Zone (see Figure 11).



*Figure 11*. Map of Phaneromeni Square, demonstrating the position of the church, in relation to Ledras, Onasagorou and Nicocleous, Liperti streets and its proximity to the Buffer Zone.

The area in question has been through considerable changes over the years, especially from the 1950s onwards. These changes can be detected in both the identity and the infrastructure of the space. In the contemporary history of Cyprus, the area has been strongly associated with important political moments and socio-political conflicts, linked to the island's ethno-national matter. Moreover, the square is filled with mnemonic elements, reminders of the colonial and ethno-national struggles.

To examine the case study of Phaneromeni Square, I apply a set of interdisciplinary methods, combining elements of co-design and participatory design practices, as well as urban design and strategies such as semi-structured interviews borrowed from the social sciences. Moreover, I build on the conceptual frameworks from Chapter 2. As briefly argued in the previous chapter, I will review the square through Massey's conception of space as form interrelated with time, and by applying Lefebvre's notion of space as a social product. I will introduce this site by using key historical events linked to the ethno-national conflict and the division of Nicosia, and discuss how it has changed socially and spatially to date. This will allow us to understand the spatial agency of the square, as well as the agency of the objects that exist in or have been removed from Phaneromeni Square. Furthermore, to examine the different forms of agency within the square, I will refer to the notion of active co-existence, and the arguments that I made in the concluding remarks of the previous chapter. I will review the iterative practice-led research methods that have been used to inform the investigation. Lastly, I will present the data gathered by the qualitative research methods (photo-documentation and semi-structured interviews).

### 4.1 The square as a spatio-temporal event

To dissect this site, I expand on Massey's argument that space is interweaved with time; space is never static. If we approach the square as a *spatio-temporal event*, that is constantly in the process of "unfinished business" (Massey, 2005, pp.130-131), then we can assert that Phaneromeni is an event constructed by society, through power geometries, within history, and is in flux. This space, then, gains powers

(Massey, 2005) that can affect subsequent events. These events can then render the space into a tool of domination and power. The historical and contemporary context of the walled city of Nicosia, and by extent of Phaneromeni Square, proves how conflict and power is translated in space and how space is integral to the possibility of politics. To make a case of how space is entangled with history and time, I present below the key events that took place in the square over the last century and the beginning of the 21st century. These events, I argue, have created a constellation which has formed Phaneromeni's identity; this constellation is then translated into how each person that happens to pass by, visit or work in the square, may perceive it. For example, I will discuss how some people see it as a symbol of the guerrilla war, and others see it as a place to call home, or a place where views can be freely exchanged.

Phaneromeni Square was once a reference point for Nicosians, and for visitors from neighbouring cities and villages who would go to the island's capital to shop for essentials. Prior to the pedestrianisation of the walled city's main arteries, cars would go through Phaneromeni Square, coming from Ledra and heading to Onasagorou Street and buses from other cities and villages would stop there (Hadjipavlou, 2013). In 1954, Archbishop Makarios III, who was also acting as leader for the Greek-Cypriot community, gave a famous speech in Phaneromeni Square addressing the Greek-Cypriot crowd. This speech, part of a rally against British rule, is known to this day as the 'Oath of Phaneromeni' (Pantelidou and Hadjicosti, 2002).[11] During the EOKA guerrilla war (1955-1959) new member initiations would often take place in the church of Phaneromeni, and student demonstrations would pass through the square. As a result, Phaneromeni Square is frequently associated with the guerrilla war and the organisation's aspiration for unity of the island with Greece (Pantelidou and Hadjicosti, 2002); this phenomenon is especially reinforced by nationalistic movements and parties of the far-right. The years 1955 to 1959 would also see the beginning of the inter-communal conflict. During that period, the British administration recruited

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[11] Cyprus was under the British rule between 1878 and 1959 (Calame and Charlesworth, 2009).

Turkish-Cypriot police officers in order to contain EOKA aggression. In 1956, the first serious clashes between the two communities took place when a Turkish-Cypriot officer was killed by EOKA (Calame and Charlesworth, 2009). In the picture below, we see the first barricades being installed by the British army, in 1956, in Phaneromeni Square and in and around the churchyard.



*Figure 12.* Barbed wire being installed in the churchyard of Phaneromeni.
Source. Marangou, et al., 2009.

After the division of the walled city of Nicosia in 1963, the invasion and occupation by Turkish troops in 1974, and as the commercial and leisure centre shifted to Eleftheria Square, followed by the pedestrianisation of the main arteries of the south side of the walled city in 1991, the area fell into decay. Most shops closed down and the residents moved outside the walls. The church continued operating and brought religious Nicosians as visitors to the square. Nevertheless, the state of neglect created room for an urban sub-culture to develop, which it did in the late 1990s. This development followed the opening of a coffee shop next to the square named Kala Kathoumena. Young people who frequented the coffee shop also spent time in the square, mainly under and around a tree, which they named Manolis, after a Greek nursery rhyme, due to the circular bench that was at

the time built around the tree. This signified the beginning of an ever-growing sub-culture of activists, anti-authoritarians, anarchists, and members of the Antifa movement,[12] who used the square as a functioning public space for leisure, as well as the exchange and expression of social and political ideas (Panayides and Hadjilouca, 2019). This group of young people often referred to the square itself as "Manolis", a name which was passed on over the years, and in the mid-2000s a pirate radio station set up by local youth was also named after Manolis. When this PhD investigation began, and for the first three years of the research, these groups of young people were still actively using the square.

Following the regeneration of the square that took place in 2004 as part of the NMP, the extensive use of the space by this sub-culture began to frustrate the administration of the church of Phaneromeni. The elderly in particular – mostly churchgoers and shop owners – felt unsafe in the presence of these groups of young people in the square. In 2010, Ionas Nikolaou (an MP at the time)[13]



*Figure 13.* A photograph of Manolis, the tree on the left, and a group of young people on the right. Source. Private archive. 2009.

[12] Organised groups that operated within the youth sub-culture of Phaneromeni Square included Syspirosi Atakton, Antifa Nicosia, who later altered their name to Antifa λευκοșα, and Skapoula. Antifa λευκόσα currently dominates the visual landscape of the area (Panayides and Hadjilouca, 2019). A large number of the young people participated in a variety of the organised groups of Phaneromeni (members of Skapoula then became members of Syspirosi Atakton; members of Antifa λευκοșα are also members of Syspirosi Atakton) (Panayides and Hadjilouca, 2019).

[13] Ionas Nicolaou served as MP and went on to become Minister of Justice and Public Order in two governments, resigning in June 2019.

described the square as the "Exarchia"[14] of Nicosia. The comparison to the troubled neighbourhood in Athens resulted in negative connotations to the area of Phaneromeni and cultivated fear amongst the locals. The media regularly covered the area and formal discussions took place regarding the safety of the square (Politis, 2011). During that time, the area was heavily policed. Rumours of increasing criminal activity drove the local authority to allow for gentrification at an extremely fast pace, in an attempt to dispel what was considered as antisocial behaviour. The gradual proliferation of new coffee shops in the square was a big threat to the activist groups, who would hang banners on the walls of the surrounding buildings to contest the ongoing re-development.

The rapid changes that took place in Phaneromeni Square created a series of conflicts between the different actors of the square (Politis, 2011). Both the local authority and the church administration were accusing the groups of young people of vandalism in the area and of not respecting the sanctity of the church. The activists, anarchists and anti-authoritarians, on their part, criticised the local authority and the church for handing over the public space to the coffee shop owners; at the same time felt that they had been excluded and chased away from a public space (Psillides, 2014). The young people from these groups believed that the sudden development of the square was a result of the local authority's effort to move the group away from the square (Figure 14) (Semi-structured interview with Stephanie Polycarpou, 2013).

In April 2014, the local authority went on to remove the public benches from the square. One of the benches that was removed was the one underneath Manolis, the tree. Following backlash on social media and in the local press,[15] the local authority brought back some of the benches, only to take them away again more recently (Figure 16). The church began closing its gates[16] at night and in 2017 it raised its railings in order to prevent young people from climbing into the

[14] Exarchia is a neighbourhood in Athens, Greece, where many socialist, anarchist and antifascist groups meet and socialise. The area is heavily policed (Cappuccini, 2015).
[15] https://cyprus-mail.com/2014/04/06/the-battle-of-the-benches/.
[16] The churchyard is traditionally a public space in Cyprus.

churchyard at night. It was an action that was reminiscent of colonial division strategies, as seen in the 1956 photograph (Figure 12). The anti-authoritarian, anarchist and antifascist groups have now moved away from the square. Currently, there are only a few young people hanging out in the churchyard when the gates are open.

This timeline of events demonstrates the argument that I made in the beginning of this section based on Massey's theory (2005) of space and time. Phaneromeni Square, seen as a spatio-temporal event, gains power and forms its identity within history and time. These woven histories are what make the 'here' and 'now', as Massey asserts (Massey, 2005). Each moment (the now) that unfolded or was manifested in the square (the here) in the contemporary history of Phaneromeni, has led to its contestation as a public space (Figures 17 and 18). Besides demonstrating key historical events and forming the square's identity, the two timelines that I have designed (Figures 17 and 18), exhibit the different forms of power that have been developed over time in the square. These forms of power allow us to identify the different actors of the square and the agency of space and of objects which are active in Phaneromeni at present. By forms of power, I refer to the power geometries that have been built over the development of the spatio-temporal event (the church and the local authority vs. the groups of young people, as well as the coffee shop owners (supported by the local authority and sometimes by the church) vs. the groups of young people).

**Figure 15.** On the left, banners hanging in Phaneromeni Square. On the right, new coffee shops start to pop up in Phaneromeni Square. In the background, anarchists and members of the Antifa movement sitting down on the cobblestones. Source. Photographs by author.



**Figure 14.** A banner hung by the group of young people in Phaneromeni Square saying "Manolis is Alive".
Source. Private photographic archive. 2012.

**Figure 16.** On the left, following the bench removals from the square in 2014, a banner saying "public spaces belong to everyone let's take them back". Source. Photograph by author, April 2014.

On the right the square at present day. All the benches have been removed. Some of the benches have been replaced by coffee shop chairs and tables. Source. Photograph by author. October 2019.

Phaneromeni Church is built on the ruins of an ancient Greek Orthodox nunnery, in the centre of the commercial quarter of the city, Phaneromeni is the largest Greek Orthodox church within the walls of Nicosia.

The Marble Mausoleum in the memory of martyrs, clergy and community leaders of Cyprus, executed in 1821 by the Ottomans, during the Greek Revolution is erected to mark the centenary of Greece's independence from Ottoman rule.

During the EOKA guerrilla war against the British Rule student demonstrations pass through Phaneromeni Square

The area is pedestrianised

The Turkish troops invade Cyprus. The decay of the walled city of Nicosia begins and the commercial centre moves outside the walls.

Fear for area is generated by the media. Phaneromeni is associated with Exarchia, the stamping ground of anarchists and antifascist in Athens.

Most of the public benches in the area are removed by the local authority.

1872   1931   1954  1955 - 1959  1958  1964   1974   1991 1996   2010 2014   2012   2015   **2020**

The Oath of Phaneromeni, a speech for the unification of the island with Greece, takes place in the Church of Phaneromeni by Archbishop Makarios III. Fifty-thousand Greek-Cypriots filled the streets around the square during the rally.

Following the intercommunal conflicts, Nicosia is divided in two.

The British army install barbed wire in the area of Phaneromeni, in order to separate the Turkish-Cypriots from the Greek-Cypriots, during intercommunal conflicts.

The coffee shop *Kala Kathoumena* opens.

A sub-culture begins to develop.

The area undergoes gentrification

The groups of anarchists, anti-authoritarians and antifastists move away from the square.

*Figure 17.* Timeline illustrating main events of Phaneromeni Square. Source. Author's own.

The square takes its name after the church of Panayia Phaneromeni.

Phaneromeni is associated with the Greek-Cypriot guerrilla war against the British rule. The Greek-Cypriot nationalists still associate the area to the Greek-Cypriot struggles for freedom.

A sub-culture is developed (a group of young people with anarchist, antiauthoritarian and antifascist views) and the area is associated with Exarchia in Athens, Greece.

The square is moving towards privatisation.

The church raises its railings.

Phaneromeni is the commercial centre of Nicosia.

The walled city of Nicosia is neglected and inhabited by immigrants. The area of Phaneromeni Square is also affected.

Phaneromeni undergoes gentrification.

Public benches removed

The groups of anarchists, antiauthoritarians and Antifa move away from the square.

1872
1931
1954 1955 - 1959 1958
1964 1974 1991 1996 2010 2014 2017 2012 2015
2020

*Figure 18.* Timeline at the bottom illustrating changes in identity of the square. Source. Author's own.

## 4.2 Unfolding the spatio-temporal event through practice-led research methods

To depict Phaneromeni Square as a spatio-temporal event, I apply a practice-led research methodology. Through a mode of practice and a process of iteration, I attempt to interpret the complexity of this contested spatio-temporal event. To do so, I adopt two research methods: photo-documentation and semi-structured interviews. These two methods have been borrowed from the social sciences by deploying an interdisciplinary manner of performance design (Hannah and Harsløf, 2008; Hann, 2019). Moreover, the research methods are supported by the frameworks built in Chapter 2.

Photo-documentation is a process through which the researcher takes a series of carefully planned photographs, aiming to document and analyse a particular visual phenomenon (Rose, 2012). Rose refers to Charles Suchar's (1997) project on gentrification in Chicago and in Amsterdam's Jordaan as an example of photo-documentation. Rose explains that key to the successful use of this method is the careful conceptualisation of the link between the research subject and the photographs being taken. To achieve this, Suchar uses what he calls a shooting script, which is essentially a set of sub-questions generated by the overall research question. The shooting script guides the researcher as to what to photograph.

The process of photo-documentation for this investigation began in spring 2013. As a Nicosian, and an individual that spent a lot of time in the area since my teen years, I knew Phaneromeni very well. Therefore, I picked this method to help me 'read' Phaneromeni through a more subjective lens: as a practitioner that visits a site for the first time. The initial shooting script was formed of three questions:

- How is the square being used at different times of the day (morning and night)?

- How is the public space of the square being used? (Are the actors using it as a passage? Are there events being held? Are people using the public furniture?)

-        Who uses the public space of the square?

If we refer back to the timelines, we can see that the initial script was written during the period in which new coffee shops were opening up. The script was revised after the first visit to the square to reflect the changes that were happening in the space at the time and four new questions were added to the script:

-        What are the banners hung by the groups of young activists, anarchists and anti-authoritarians?

-        What forms of conflict are evident in the square?

-        In what ways is the contestation of the square evident in the fabric of the square?

-        How is the square changing in terms of commercialisation and privatisation?

The process of photo-documentation has been used throughout the investigation, only in a less frequent format than the initial stages of the practice-led research, and towards the end, it aimed to document the changes that happened in the square, rather than give answers as to the ways in which the square was being used.

The photographs have been divided according to the month they were taken and then sub-divided according to the time of day. If the photographs taken were from a specific event in the square, they were then filed under the name of the event. Each file then consisted of smaller files responding to the questions listed above. A separate file was also created for images gathered from archives, books and online newspapers . The photo-documentation archive, acting like a log, provides data for the examination of Phaneromeni Square, and a live record of the changes it has been undergoing since 2013 (Appendix 2). The photographs have been a key medium for the interpretation of the types of agency within the square.

Following my observations on Phaneromeni Square, the historical and contemporary context research through literature and newspaper articles, and after the first stage of the photo-documentation process, a list of the actors of the square was compiled. The actors were divided in two categories: stakeholders and users.

| *Stakeholders* | *Users* |
|---|---|
| 1. **Shop owners**: a combination of new coffee shop owners and shop owners whose businesses have been in the square prior to the gentrification. | 1. **Activists, anarchists, members of the Antifa movement and anti-authoritarians:** a group of young people between the ages of 14 and 30 who gathered in the square. These groups used the public space for leisure until 2015. |
| 2. **The church:** the institution of Panayia Phaneromeni, one of the largest stakeholders in the area. As mentioned earlier in the text, the church owns a large number of buildings in the area surrounding the square. The institution is represented by the priests and the administrative staff of the church. | 2. **Coffee shop customers:** Nicosians between the ages of 18–45, who visit the south side of the walled city mainly in order to go to the coffee shops, restaurants and bars of the area. |
| 3. **The local authority:** The Municipality of Nicosia, represented by the Mayor and the council's office staff. | 3. **Children and young adults** who live nearby. |
| 4. **The residents:** people who live in the buildings next to the square on Ledra Street and Nicocleous Street. | |

*Table 1.* Actors of Phaneromeni Square

Following the initial stages of the photo-documentation process (March 2013) and the identification of the actors, I held a series of semi-structured interviews with members of the stakeholder and user groups as identified above (Table 1). The format of the semi-structured interviews allowed for a more relaxed conversation with the interviewees, which in turn provided the opportunity to collect qualitative data on Phaneromeni Square. Each interview had a similar structure, and I followed a pattern in the questions for both groups. Each interviewee was asked at the end of the interview to share a story or anecdote linked to Phaneromeni Square. The average duration of each interview was thirty minutes. With the consent of the actors, the interviews were audio-recorded, then transcribed and analysed (see Appendix 3 for examples of transcripts).

To analyse the data, I used what Watts (2014) calls "first person perspective", which means that we allow the participants to lead us; we understand the data from the perspective of the participant. During the data analysis, I created a set of themes and sub-themes in order to categorise my findings. The categorisation allowed me to identify a pattern in the answers provided within each group. For example, the interviewees from the group of activists, anarchists and anti-authoritarians would all mention the police presence in the square and their fears around privatisation of the public space. I held 13 interviews overall (Figure 19) and stopped when the answers showed a sustained pattern. The overall process lasted from March to November 2013. Below are extracts from interviews with a range of actors during this period (selected transcripts can be found in Appendix 3).

> It is the worst thing that could happen to the square, I mean... it is a public space and we used to use it that way and we wanted to promote this - the fact that it is a public space... And now they took the public square and turned it into a private space. Because where we used to sit, it is now full of tables and you have to pay if you want to be there. And now we feel uncomfortable being there, because there are so many people sitting around us, who judge our appearance. And that was the only place that we didn't feel uncomfortable. So, personally I can say that I find this

development criminal. (Member of an activist, anarchist and anti-authoritarian group, aged 25, 30 July 2013)

I feel awful and most people do, because this was our place, we would come here and spend our time without anyone bothering us. And then the coffee shops came along and invaded somehow our personal space and it's really annoying because we now feel that we constantly have an audience. And it is mostly people who were scared to come to the area in the past because they thought that we were dangerous, and now we have become an attraction for them. And the fact that the church closes the doors to the churchyard.... And all the parties that Skapoula organised recently were shut down by the police within fifteen minutes because the coffee shops made complaints. We can't use the square as a blank canvas like we used to do in the past. (Member of an activist, anarchist and anti-authoritarian group, aged 18, 09 November 2013)

I mean there is no public space anymore. Erm... they have been trying to kick us out – as a social group – for a long time now... This matter was even discussed in the Parliament... (Member of an activist, anarchist and anti-authoritarian group, aged 20, 10 July 2013)

The friction between the café customers and the anarchists was evident.

The co-existence between myself and the sixteen-year-old that hangs out in the square is not really of my concern. (Coffee shop customer, aged 28, 24 October 2013)

I don't know why they like sitting on the floor, littering the square and being noisy in the church courtyard, which is not right to do... Erm... It's people who are trying to prove something and they just sit there. And to my opinion it is not people who respect the old city. (Coffee shop customer, aged 28, 08 November 2013)

At the same time, both the church and the local authority discussed how the activists, anarchists and anti-authoritarians do not respect the church and that they create disturbance in the area.

> I think that they should stop vandalising the church... I believe that everyone is free to live as they please. (Mayor of Nicosia, 08 July 2013)

> Now... regarding the young people who hang out in the area... I have a formed an opinion on this matter... These young people chose to have a different style of having fun, which I respect as a choice... but I wouldn't say that I approve of it... The actions that take place by this group of people could be avoided: for example, the vandalism and spray painting on beautiful buildings, not respecting the church... these actions could be avoided... What I would like from these young people is for them to respect the area... the church, the shop owners... (Executive administrator and accountant of Panayia Phaneromeni Church, 13 June 2013)

**Phaneromeni Square**

Stakeholders

Users

Local Authority

Constantinos Yorkadjis
(Mayor of Nicosia)
Agni Petridou
(Head of the Town
Planning and Housing
Department of the Mu-
nicipality of Nicosia)

Church

Andreas Savva
(Executive Administrator
and Accountant of the
Church of
Panayia Phaneromeni)
Father Charalambos
Zoumos
(Priest at the Church of
Panayia Phaneromeni)

Shop owners

Maro Hadjipavlou
(Owner of Hadjipavlou
Optical Shop)
Erica Vassiliou
(coffee-shop owner)

Residents

Euthymia Alphas
Marina Mandri

Activists, anarchists,
anti-authoritarians

Stephanie Polycarpou (Utopia)
Panix (Panayiotis Achniotis)
Feelix

Coffee shop customers

Savvas Yordamlis
Valentina Ieridou

*Figure 19.* Interview chart

### 4.2.1 Whose space is it?

The conflict around privatisation and on the occupation of the public space of the square drives us to pose the question "whose space is it?". Ali Mandanipour (2019) asks if contemporary public spaces are indeed for everyone or "do they serve only some people?". Mandanipour notes that the key feature of a public space is accessibility, in that the level of publicness of a place depends on its accessibility: "Access is not abstract and universal: it is the expression of relationships between people, an expression of power and control over power and control over territory, an interplay of inclusion and exclusion" (Mandanipour, 2019).

Accessibility is also an important element for Langstraat, et al. (2013), who devised a comparison tool to measure the publicness of a space. The OMAI model of publicness (Figure 20) (Langstraat, et al., 2013), is a tool that measures the publicness of a space in terms of ownership, management, accessibility and inclusiveness.
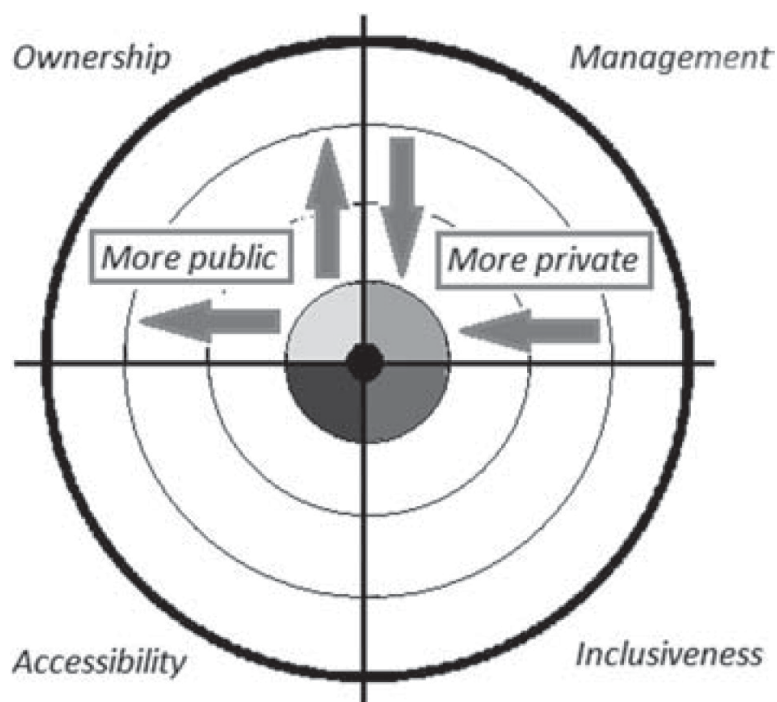


*Figure 20.* The OMAI model of publicness. Source. Langstraat, et al., 2013.

Although this model was created to compare public spaces by making the differences between them visible, in this occasion it is used to assess the

publicness of one sole space, through comparing the segments of the circle. Moreover, the model has been updated over the course of the investigation and has been used to compare the changes in the square through time. This tool uses four dimensions to define publicness: *ownership*, *management*, *accessibility* and *inclusiveness* (OMAI). The ownership dimension refers to the legal status of the place. Ownership brings along power, authority, rights, boundaries, the policing of boundaries, rights of exclusion and rights of inclusion. Management refers to the way the place is being managed on a day-to-day basis, as well as the methods of control, such as security guards and the use of CCTV cameras. Accessibility indicates the general access to a public space and the way the space is designed, for example if there are entrances that are deliberately obstructed to make a space appear less public. Finally, inclusiveness signifies the way the demands and needs of different individuals and groups are met in a public space (Langstraat, et al., 2013).

Applying the OMAI model on the data gathered during the investigation of Phaneromeni Square, we can see that the legal ownership of Phaneromeni Square rests with the local government and the church (Figure 24). In terms of management, the space is a responsibility of the Nicosia municipality. Nevertheless, the local coffee shops and the church hired private security guards to protect their properties. So far, one could conclude that this is a fully public space, however, the accessibility from the afternoon onwards is limited, as the church closes its gates (the railings were raised, and spikes were added on top in 2017), and thus limits the flow of the public from one side of the square to the other. By assessing the inclusiveness of the space, we see that the street furniture has gradually been removed and replaced by privately owned coffee shop tables and chairs. Currently the only public bench that remains is situated next to a large recycling bin. Consequently, even though Phaneromeni Square is publicly owned and managed, there seems to be a strong influence from the stakeholders of the area and a commercial dominance, which leads us to draw conclusions with regards the privatisation of the square.
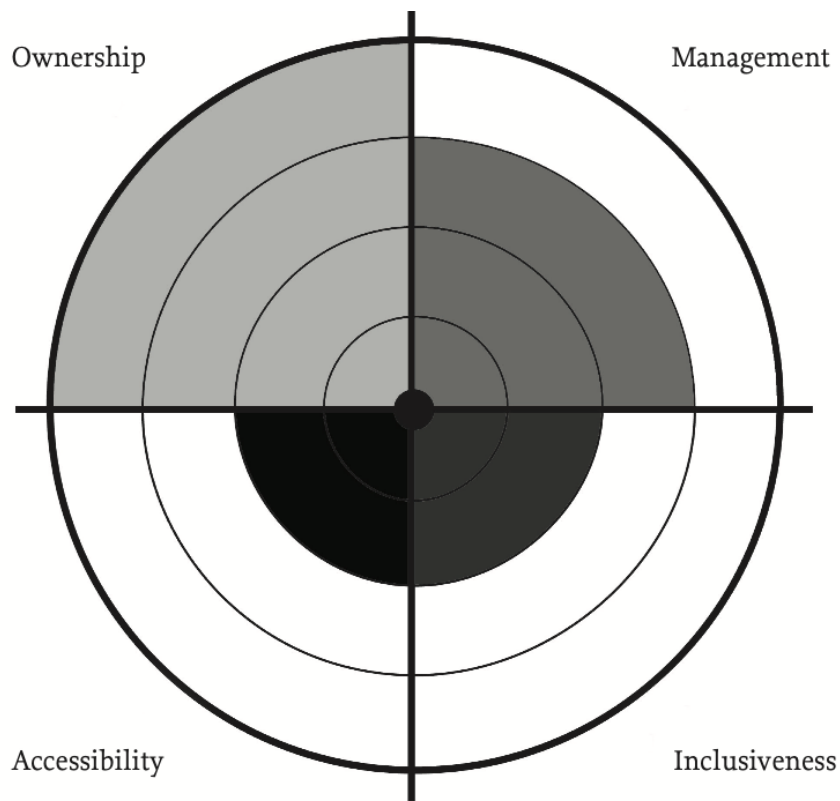
*Figure 21.* Testing the publicness of Phaneromeni Square using the OMAI model.

Here, we could draw a parallel with the conceptual framework created in Chapter 2, based on Zukin's "pacification by cappuccino". Phaneromeni, as shown through the OMAI model of publicness, is on the way to privatisation, and the space's identity is being increasingly constructed around a coffee shop culture, with clear regulations about who is or is not allowed to use the square, and how they can behave there.

### 4.2.2 Conflict and power in the spatio-temporal event

When we look at the data collected from the aforementioned research methods and processes, we understand that the different actor groups within Phaneromeni fathom the space in a different way. We could argue that the stakeholders, the churchgoers and the coffee shop customers want Phaneromeni to be what Lefebvre (1991) calls a "representation of space"; a space that is well planned and controlled. Meanwhile, the groups of activists, anarchists and anti-authoritarians see Phaneromeni as an imagined and appropriated space, a representational space.

The multiplicity of moments and events that are produced in Phaneromeni, which are interlaced with the actors' stories, transform the square into a political arena. The political dimension, as defined by Mouffe (2005), is what produces the antagonism and conflicts in Phaneromeni. To depict the different forms of conflict produced in this political dimension, I created a series of diagrams. As this investigation follows an iterative process, the diagrams changed as the investigation progressed and more data were gathered through the design experiments (Chapter 5). Each diagram illustrates a different type of conflict and antagonism deriving from the spatio-temporal event.

The first diagram presents the conflict sparked from the fear of privatisation of the public space (Figure 22). The self-organised groups (activists, anarchists and anti-authoritarians) felt strongly that the local authority and the church were pushing towards the privatisation of Phaneromeni Square as a way to keep them out from the area:

> [...] they began gradually shrinking the public square. At least that's how I felt... At first it was the new coffee shops with their chairs and tables, the removal of the benches and then the church began closing its doors... so the group of people (activists, anarchists, anti-authoritarians), gradually started leaving from the square. I mean you don't see young people hanging out here anymore using the public space..." (Round table discussion, Nasia Charalambous, 2015)

> I once had a conversation with the Mayor and he told me that "If the vandalisms [on the church walls] don't stop I will fill the square with coffee shop tables, so that I make them stop". (Round table discussion, Polycarpou, 2015)

During the first two scenographic interventions (discussed in Chapter 5), the coffee shop customers expressed their worry that the church's decision to close its gates during evening hours and to hire private security is a sign of privatisation. This diagram (Figure 22) illustrates all the stakeholders and the users of Phaneromeni Square. The groups involved in the conflict over the privatisation of

public space are highlighted. The arrows present the actor sparking the conflict. The local authority, the church and the self-organised groups appear to be larger in the diagram as the research revealed that they are the three main actors involved in this conflict. The coffee shop customers are a secondary actor in this conflict: while they criticise the church for closing its gates and hiring private security, at the same time, they still enjoy the changes brought by the regeneration of the square.

Another type of conflict has been observed and reported by the interviewees of this investigation and by the Cypriot press (Figure 23). This diagram depicts the antagonistic behaviours shown by different and sometimes extreme political ideologies. The main actors that were identified in this conflict are the activists, anarchists and anti-authoritarians and the nationalist party E.L.A.M., alongside members of the Greek nationalist party Golden Dawn (see photo-documentation log in Appendix 2). In this conflict we also have, what we could call, two invisible actors, the local authority and the church, who according to the activists, anarchists and anti-authoritarians have brought political attention to the area in order to drive them away from the square. Also, in their opinion, the church breeds nationalist zealotry. The political conflict has been generated from the different beliefs related to the ethno-national conflict. As explained previously, the nationalist parties relate the square to the struggle for the freedom of the island from British rule and unification with Greece. The activists, anarchists and anti-authoritarians, by contrast, fight against fascism and are strong believers in a reunified and bi-communal Cyprus.
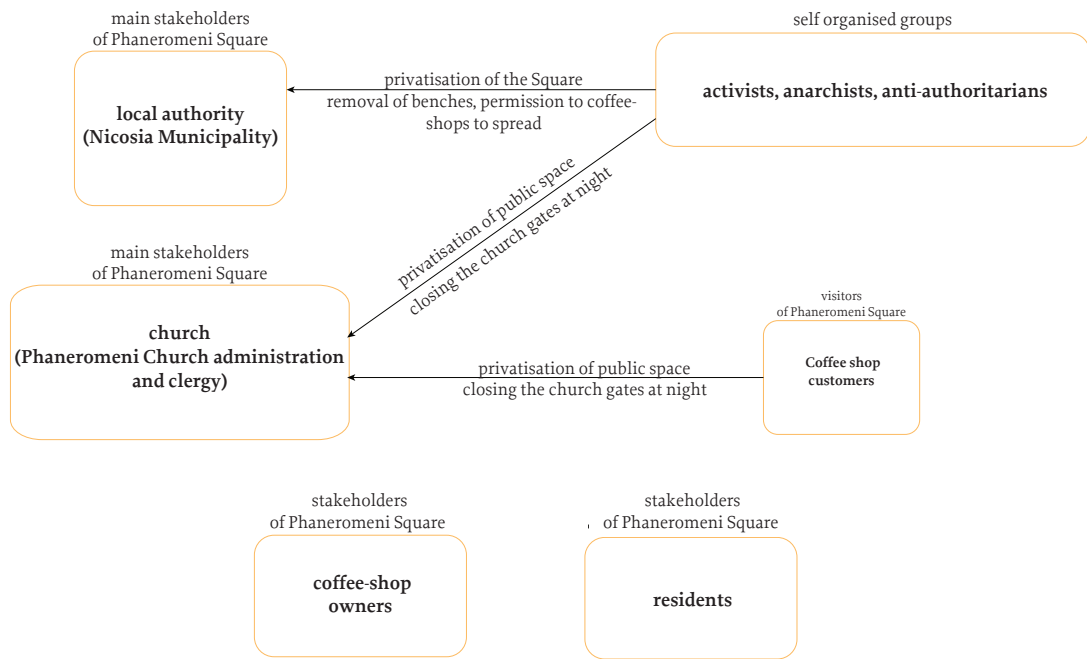
**Figure 22.** Diagram illustrating conflicts in relation to privatisation.
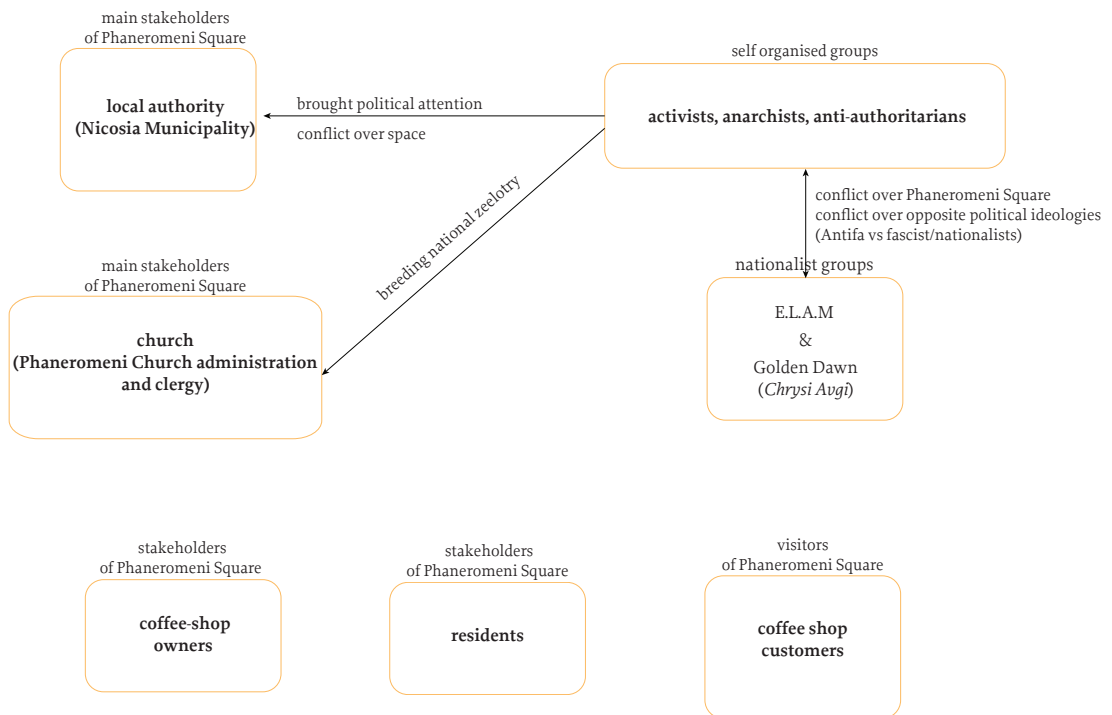


**Figure 23.** Diagram illustrating conflicts in relation to political views.

A third diagram (Figure 24) has been created to illustrate how the space of the square has been occupied by the different actors of Phaneromeni, and how the presence of the groups has created frictions.
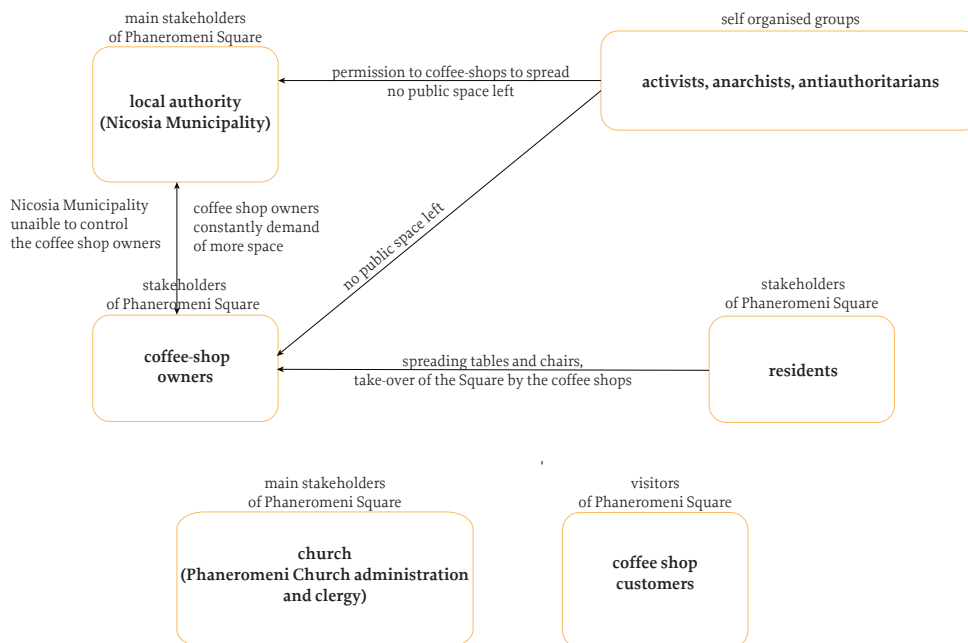


*Figure 24.* Diagram illustrating spatial occupation.

## 4.3 The need for active co-existence

Through the privatisation of this public space, we risk the alienation and exclusion of certain members of the community; this is a phenomenon which we have already seen happening in Phaneromeni. With the closing of its gates, the church excludes members of the public from a traditionally public space: the churchyard. Moreover, by raisings its railings and adding spikes, the church creates a hostile environment around Phaneromeni, and builds a subconscious "scary space" (Carmona, 2010). The groups of anarchists, anti-authoritarians and members of the Antifa movement have slowly been chased away from the square. As we see in the pictures portrayed in Figure 16, the space has been – to use Mayor Yiorkadjis' phrase – "cleaned": there are no more banners protesting for civil rights and rights to the city, and there are no public benches for anyone who does not fit

the image of the square. We can argue here that by encouraging a private coffee culture and removing public elements such as uninterrupted accessibility and public furniture, there has been a cultivation of a culture built in individuality.

This brings us back to the concept I proposed in Chapter 2 of active co-existence. Contrary to neoliberal tactics, which have an exclusionary logic and tend to produce spaces based on individuality, active co-existence calls for multiplicities and agonistic practices, allowing plural voices to be expressed within a public space. The need for these agonistic practices was identified early on in the research, during the practice-led investigation presented earlier in this chapter. The following chapter will discuss the methodologies used by the performance designer to trigger, and interrogate the need for, as well as the act of, maintaining active co-existence.

## 4.4 Insights

This chapter examined the site of research and the practice-led research methods that have been used to depict Phaneromeni Square and its actors. The methods used for the analysis of the square informed us of its entangled political nature and led us to interpret Phaneromeni as a spatio-temporal event. Moreover, these methods are used to inform the role of the performance designer and the methodology of performance design in the contested urban milieu. Here we see a paradigm of the performance designer that deploys an interdisciplinary mode of research, and uses theoretical frameworks as well as methods from cultural geography, social sciences, co-design, urban design and architecture, to enrich the findings of the investigation. Through this process, the performance designer becomes an investigator via a mode of interdisciplinarity and examines the spatio-temporal event and its actors, in order to collect a set of information and data, and respond through practice. In the case of this enquiry, the practice is comprised of scenographic interventions, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. Furthermore, through this mode of practice-led research, we are able to build on the discussion on the position of the artist, and the role of the artist within a site-specific project. As introduced in Chapter 1, the notion of the local, according to Jeanne van Heeswijk, can also refer to the concept of belonging.

Through the process of photo-documentation and semi-structured interviews, I was able to construct a new local and create and new sense of belonging in relation to Phaneromeni Square and the multiplicities that have been constructed over the years by the different groups within the square.

**5.**

# Methodology: the triggering acts

The previous chapter reviewed the case study of Phaneromeni Square and discussed the practice-led research methods employed by this investigation to examine the square as a spatio-temporal event and the actors within it. The socio-political conflicts pinpointed through the research lead me to identify the need for active co-existence and look for multiplicities within the square. In this chapter, I will present and discuss the design experiments comprising this enquiry's research-led practice. The relationship between the two (practice-led research and research-led practice) has allowed me to build and enrich the notion of active co-existence, as discussed in this chapter's insight remarks and in the Conclusion. Through a discussion on the design process and outcomes of the scenographic interventions, I will contribute to the understanding of Phaneromeni Square as a spatio-temporal event and make a case on the political role of the performance designer. I will make a case on a new understanding of the notion of site specificity, built around the frameworks of the spatio-temporal event and the social space. This discussion will lead us to the conclusion and a discussion on the production of the manifesto on the role of the performance designer within social art practice in the urban milieu. Moreover, through the presentation of the toolkit, which resulted out of the design and development of the scenographic interventions, I will discuss how performance design can be used as a methodological instrument for interruptive, temporary and site-specific interventions.

Hann's (2019) understanding of place orientation speaks of the body–event relationship which has the ability to alter or craft an encounter with a place. Drawing from Henri Lefebvre's (1991) concept on the relation and situation of a person with space, Hann asserts that orientations emerge from how bodies relate to objects and to other bodies: "Acts of orientations extend to the intangible atmospheric qualities, along with the learned social conventions. [...] To speak of

orientation is to recognise the multiplicities of phenomena that situate bodies within and with place" (Hann, 2019, p.19).

By referring to the data presented in Chapter 4, we can approach Phaneromeni Square as an event, conceived from a social point (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005). Here, I deploy the frameworks created in Chapter 2, based on Lefebvre's concept of social space, and examine the place orientations within the square through the dual nature of the conceived space: a) how each actor relates to Phaneromeni Square and situates themselves within this space; and b) how the square acts as a mediator providing a cluster of objects and bodies.

To achieve this, I created a set of design experiments comprising three scenographic interventions and a series of practical workshops (for documentation on the scenographic interventions, please refer to Appendix 5). The intent of the scenographic interventions was twofold: 1) to be employed as a method for the research-led examination of the case study, and 2) to contribute to this enquiry's hypothesis i.e., that performance design can be used as a methodology informed by and within social art practice in the contested urban site. The practical workshops that followed aimed at developing and testing the toolkit, which was derived from the scenographic interventions' iterative process.

To determine what is meant by scenographic, we must refer to Rachel Hann's argument with regards to this notion: she proposed and reclaimed the term in her book 'Beyond Scenography' (2019). For Hann, scenographics are acts of place orientation; they account for "intangible utterances that enact how certain crafted assemblages orientate, and how in turn are oriented by human bodies". Consequently, I argue that this investigation's scenographic interventions can be seen as acts of place orientation within Phaneromeni Square. Drawing from the theoretical frameworks of this thesis, the interventions are employed to negotiate our relationship (bodily, spatially and politically) to the square in the present, whilst taking in consideration the creation of this place through history. At the same time, the scenographic interventions seek to examine the relations between the square's actors, the square as space, and the objects; that is, the existing objects

within the square and the objects introduced by the interventions. By doing so, the interventions will create a multiplicity of phenomena and act as manifestations of active co-existence.

## 5.1 The scenographic interventions

Each scenographic intervention was designed with its own set of aims. The first intervention was used as a research method to verify insights gained during the practice-led research. The intervention aimed to examine the conflicts between the different actors of the square, which were pinpointed during the initial stages of the photo-documentation process and following the information gathered from the semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, the intervention aimed to question the publicness of Phaneromeni Square. As discussed in the previous chapters, the contestation of the square derives from the conflicts enacted within the space, and from the threat of privatisation. Upon the completion of the first intervention, I was able to verify the hypothesis for the need of multiplicities in the space, which was made during the initial stages of the practice-led research of the case study. The second intervention aimed to test the act of triggering active co-existence between the different actors that used the square. The third intervention aimed to question the future of the square in relation to its publicness and the changes that were taking place. Using a process of iteration, the third intervention also aimed to test the potential for developing the role of the designer to someone who can facilitate a state of active co-existence.

Taking further the argument that the scenographic interventions are acts of place orientation within the square, I created a diagram mapping out the general rationale driving each design process of the intervention, as well as examining the outcomes. The following diagram (Figure 25) illustrates the interconnectedness of the space and time, the agencies of the bodies and the materials and objects found in the space, as well as the mediation of these elements by the intervention. In this diagram, we can see that the four elements – space, time, material and body – follow one another in a circular form. Each element is affected by the other, and therefore the arrows point both ways within the circle and across. I take as a given

that space exists and is followed by time, which both in turn affect the material (objects) that are in space and in turn the bodies, which through their movement also affect the formation of space. To better understand this train of thought we must look at each intervention more closely.
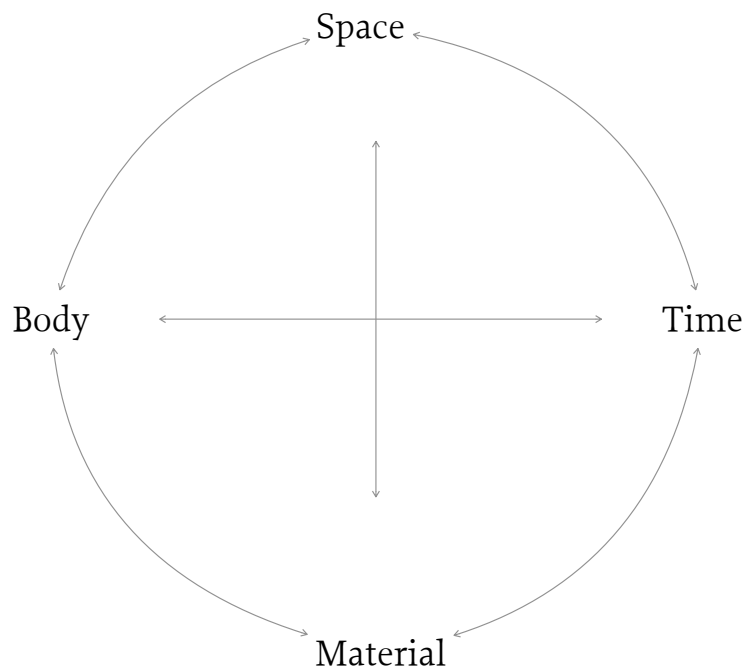


*Figure 25.* Scenographic interventions as place orientations. Source. Author's own.

### 5.1.1 Scenographic Intervention No. 1 – Re-Design Phaneromeni Square

The first scenographic intervention – '*Re*-Design Phaneromeni Square' – took place in January 2014, and was designed as a research instrument to be implemented as part of the research-led practice. The intervention aimed at introducing the project to the actors of the square, investigating the conflicts between them and questioning its publicness. For the purposes of the first intervention, I used elements from co-design practices (Hou and Rios, 2003; Bjorvigsson, Ehn and Hillgren, 2012). I rode around the square on a three-wheeled bicycle, asking the actors to re-design Phaneromeni Square on printed panoramas of the square, offering in exchange baked goods, coffee and lemonade (Figures 26 - 28).

The first stop for *Re*-Design Phaneromeni was in front of the school of Phaneromeni; there were two stops within that area, as shown in Figure 27. While the case study concentrates solely on the church side of the square, the decision to begin the intervention on the school side was made in order to receive a better and more holistic understanding of the different actors of the square. After the first two stops, the three-wheeled bicycle then moved to the front of the church. There was only one stop there, as it proved difficult to move around in the space, due to the number of motorbikes parked in the square and the overwhelming amount of coffee shop tables and chairs. As a result, the intervention remained in front of a public bench in the middle of the square (Figure 28). This bench has now been removed and replaced with more coffee shop tables and chairs (Figure 29). The intervention took place during the busier hours of the square during wintertime (11am – 6pm). Following the completion of the intervention, I gathered the panoramas and pasted them onto my studio wall (Figure 30). From there, I collected the data that were shared by the actors and transcribed them onto an Excel table (Appendix 4). This process allowed me to create a set of categories in relation to the actors' inputs. Through these panoramas, the actors of the square were able to tell their stories. When they were asked to re-design the square, they were given a sense of freedom to express their opinion in regards to that particular public space. Through the act of doodling and noting down on the panoramas, issues besides the use of the public space came up, concerning social and political matters in the area. Moreover, through the notes and doodles of the participants, I was able to depict the different types of conflict within the square. The outcomes of the first intervention underpinned the conclusions drawn during the initial investigation of the square, as presented in Chapter 4. The panoramas revealed that the actors were concerned about the accessibility of the public to the square and the lack of public furniture. The constant moving and removing of benches by the local authority was a recurring theme.

**Figure 26.** Stills from *Re-*Design Phaneromeni, showing the panoramas and a participant drawing their version of the square on one of the panoramas. Stop: school side. Source. Photograph by author.
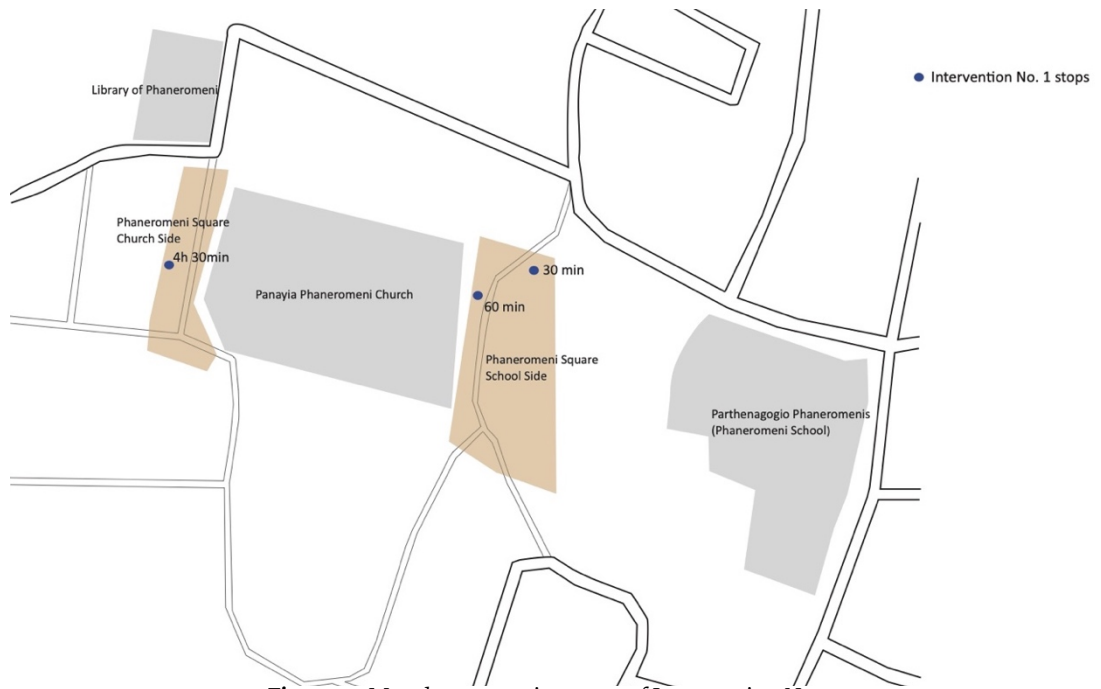
Figure 27. Map demonstrating stops of Intervention No. 1.



Figure 28. Stills from *Re*-Design Phaneromeni. Stop: Church side.
Source. Photograph taken by author, 2014

***Figure 29.*** Photograph showing the replacement of the public bench, pictured above, by coffee shop furniture. Source. Photograph by author, 2014



***Figure 30.*** Panoramas gathered from *Re*-Design Phaneromeni. Source. Photograph by author.
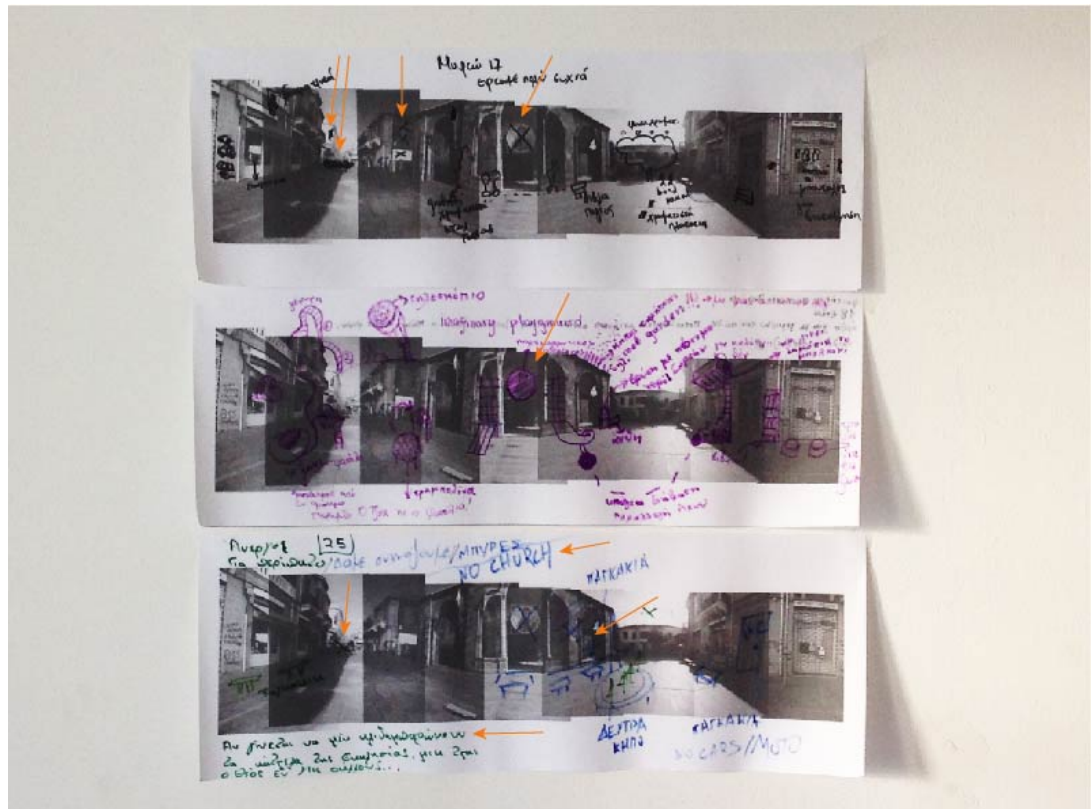
*Figure 31.* A sample of the panoramas gathered from *Re*-Design Phaneromeni.
Source. Photograph by author.

### 5.1.2 Scenographic Intervention No. 2 – sit.move.play

Based on the findings from the first intervention, I designed the next scenographic intervention in February 2014. By following iterative steps, this intervention, much like the previous one, was designed to question and challenge the publicness of the square, but it also aimed at triggering active co-existence between the different actors that used the square. Intervention No. 2 – 'sit.move.play' – comprised ten traditional coffee shop chairs placed in the middle of the square. Each chair was given a neon yellow speech bubble that said:

> Welcome to Phaneromeni. You can move me around, follow the sun or the shade. But you can't take me home with you. Oh! And don't forget to make a mark of my new position with the chalk that you can find in the envelope hanging on my back. (Figure 32)

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The chalk drawing created a physical diagram on the square of the chairs' flow in the space and created a large-scale illustration of the acts of place orientation. In the envelope that carried the chalks I had placed a flyer introducing the project. The intervention took place at a time where most of the public benches within Phaneromeni Square had been removed by the local authority. Simultaneously, a red dotted line had been drawn on the cobblestones, which defined the area which was allowed to be used by the coffee shops for their outdoor furniture. The intervention chairs provided an alternative for public seating. Here, we can argue that the intervention triggered a new imagining of public space, while at the same time it challenged the boundaries between the 'private' and the 'public' space as defined by the local authority via the red dotted line. At the same time, the chairs acted as a medium of interaction between the square's actors, as passers-by would ask each other about the intervention and the ones who were sitting there for some time would explain to newcomers what was going on.

The act of the scenographic intervention sparked a discussion around the publicness of the square. Following the completion of the intervention, I was asked to give an interview in City Free Press, a free online newspaper, discussing the importance of the project, the fears around privatisation of the square and the municipality's actions to remove the benches.[17] The article featured a presentation by the local authority that took place in March 2014 and public backlash regarding the council's decision to remove the benches from Phaneromeni Square. It then went on to present the first two interventions of this research project, focusing on the role of the intervention as provocations around the notion of public space.

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[17] http://city.sigmalive.com/article/1123/me-ti-symmetohi-kai-ti-gnomi-sas-allazoyme-ti-leykosia

**Figure 32.** Still from Scenographic Intervention No. 2 depicting participants engaging with each other.
Source. Photograph by Audrey Anaxagorou.



**Figure 33.** Still from sit.move.play, depicting the initial setup of the intervention.
Source. Photograph by author.

The third intervention took place a year later (January 2015) and the groups of young people had significantly decreased. The intervention took the form of a round table discussion, which was held around a public bench that had just been re-installed in the square by the local authority. The parties invited to the discussion were actors from the groups of activists, anarchists and anti-authoritarians, as well as coffee shop regulars.

The aim of this third intervention was to open up a discussion on the following:

1.   How can the identity of Phaneromeni Square survive?[18]

2.   How can life in the square be sustained in the coming years, and not be overwhelmed by economic or political changes that will take place in the island?

3.   Can the designer act as a 'trigger' for social engagement and 'active co-existence'?

The round table discussion took place in Phaneromeni Square, on 27 January 2015, between 18:00 – 20:00. There were five participants: three coffee shop patrons (a photographer, aged 29, an architect, aged 29, and a lawyer aged 30), and two 31-year-old members of an activist, anarchist and anti-authoritarian group called Utopia Collectiva (one was a teacher). When all the participants arrived and were seated, introductions took place, each one stating their name, age, profession and relation to Phaneromeni Square. Following introductions, I briefly presented the first two interventions and their outcomes, the aim of the third intervention and the discussion topics. The discussion was audio-recorded. The participants were engaged throughout and some insightful topics came up, which allowed the thought process of this investigation to progress. The main topics and worries that

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[18] This question was inspired by a quote I pulled from a semi-structured interview: "Without having the sub-culture that has been there for over a decade, how can Phaneromeni survive? With the groups having to move because they don't have any square left to hang out, or the residents having to relocate due to the fact that they cannot handle the overflow of visitors?".

were brought up by the participants were that following the development of the square and the opening of the coffee shops, the group of young people had been chased away, and once again marginalised. The group expressed their concerns around social segregation due to these changes and also blamed the church for these developments, as it is the biggest stakeholder in the area, renting property to the coffee shop owners and increasing the security by closing the gates during evening hours. Moreover, the group discussed their fears around the privatisation of the public space that is a result of the above actions.

*Figure 35.* Still from round table discussion. Source. Photograph by A. Papageorgiou. January 2015



*Figure 34.* Still from the round table discussion. Source. Photograph by A. Papageorgiou. January 2015.

## 5.2 A toolkit for social engagement

By following an iterative process throughout the investigation, I was able to identify an array of recurring notions deriving from the design process and evaluation of the scenographic interventions (agency of space, agency of objects, tacit knowledge, narrativity and authorship). These notions were then listed and translated into a set of tools, to form the toolkit for scenographic interventions. The goal of this toolkit is to help other practitioners use a range of interdisciplinary methods to investigate a public space as a spatio-temporal event and the actors within it. Through the toolkit, the scenographic intervention becomes the instrument for a practice-led investigation. This toolkit provides a starting point for a discussion on the notions of site specificity, agitation and social action. The toolkit can be used as a pedagogical tool for introducing notions of self-reflexivity and investigating the practitioner's role within a project for social change in the contested urban realm.

In the following sub-sections, I will review the set of notions identified through the design process, as well as the execution and outcome of the scenographic interventions. These four notions as listed above, have become the drivers for the design process of the scenographic interventions. They act as binding factors for triggering and sustaining active co-existence.

### 5.2.1 Concepts of performance design and social engagement

Upon the completion of each intervention, the design process was mapped out and the outcomes were listed and examined. As previously mentioned, this process revealed the following recurring notions: a) the agency of space, b) tacit knowledge, c) the agency of objects, d) narrativity and authorship. I will briefly present the concepts and go on to discuss how each one has been used or revealed through the scenographic interventions.

*The agency of space*

As Massey (2005) asserts, space is not a flat surface. It is a living organism, created within history, through which our embodied experience and knowledge is

expanded. It is argued here, similarly to Lefebvre (1991) who asserts that space is a social product, that the agency of a space is generated through the social, time and events within time. Subsequently, objects within the space can contribute towards its agency.

To interpret the spatial agency of Phaneromeni Square, I have combined the data gathered from the photo-documentation process, the semi-structured interviews, and the outcome evaluation of the three scenographic interventions. As discussed earlier in this chapter, by perceiving Phaneromeni as a mediator, we acknowledge that the square changes within history and time. This has been illustrated in the two timelines (Figure 17 and Figure 18) in Chapter 4. The changes that occur in the square are key to understand the agency of the square, and have been used as a core element within the iterative process of the investigation.

### Using tacit knowledge

Tacit knowledge is developed through experience, where "we know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 1966, p.4) and we are unconsciously aware of things before we can consciously attend to them. Tacit knowledge affords us with what Nelson (2006, p.197) refers to as "embodied knowledge", which is the type of knowledge that may be "incommunicable" through words but, nonetheless, affords the basis of "knowledge-creation".

The first intervention took place during the initial stages of the practice-led research, in January 2014. To plan, design and execute the intervention, I used my own embodied knowledge of the square, as well as the information that I had gathered from the desk research, the photo documentation and the semi-structured interviews. At the time, new coffee shops had just begun to appear in the square, and I knew that there was already a lot of tension between the existing users of the square,[19] and the local authority and the church. This insight led me to the decision to use a three-wheeled bicycle to move around the square; my

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[19] Anarchists, anti-authoritarians, and members of the Antifa movement.

presence would be perceived as less hostile and I'd be able to gather as much information as possible from the different actors of the square (Figure 28).

Accordingly, for the second scenographic intervention, which took place in February 2014, I used the observations made during the first intervention, as well as the knowledge provided by the news at the time. A red dotted line had been drawn on the cobblestones by the local authority to define the limits between the public space and the space used by the new coffee shops. Between the first and the second interventions, the local authority had also removed some of the public benches. Moreover, most of the anarchists had stopped frequenting the square. The information gathered from Scenographic Intervention No. 1, as well as my personal knowledge of the lack of public benches led me to use a set of coffee shop chairs as the key protagonist for the second intervention. The awareness of the red-dotted line allowed me to become playful with the positioning of the chairs, but also to use the second intervention to question the actions of the local authority and generate a discussion (Figure 36).

The third intervention was carried out in April 2015. In the year that passed between the two interventions, the remaining public benches had been removed from the area, causing a backlash on social media and in the local press. A few weeks before the third intervention took place, the local authority conceded to return one of the benches. Although the bench was reinstalled in its former position, it was not bolted down. This action led me to question the local authority's intentions and I decided to appropriate the bench and turn it into a temporary table for the purposes of the round table discussion that shaped Scenographic Intervention No. 3 (Figure 35).

*Figure 36.* Still from sit.move.play, showing the initial positioning of the chairs.
Source. Author's own. February 2014.

*The agency of objects*

The concept of agency in relation to objects has been explored in several different contexts, for example in anthropology, through the context of materiality and material anthropology (Gell, 1998; Miller, 2008), and in the context of sociology, through the analysis of the meanings given by society to objects (Bourdieu, 1977; Csikszentmihalyi and Halton, 1981), and Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2007). This enquiry adopts the notion of the agency of objects as is understood within the phenomenology of scenography and post-dramatic theatre (Chapter 1). Jocelyn McKinney (2015) asks "what is it that objects and materials themselves might be capable of?". In examples of post-dramatic theatre, objects perform without people. The objects become "protagonists" and interact with other scenographic elements, creating a play on their own (Lehmann, 2006). These objects are granted a form of power, which allows them to disseminate a narrative.

I argue that the scenographic interventions are able to perform and interact with the 'audience' or in the case of this practice-led investigation, the actors of the square, without the presence of bodies. This is achieved by the agency of the

objects within the interventions. Moreover, in this way, the scenographic interventions can be seen as acts of place orientations. I will return to this argument and discuss it in more detail in sub-section 5.3.

In the first intervention, I used copies of black and white panoramas of the square that I had created and asked the audience to draw on them and thus re-design the square. These panoramas became the carriers of stories and conflicts. When put together, the panoramas revealed the complexity of the urban fabric of Nicosia and the socio-political issues that are so often overshadowed by the ethno-national matter, but nevertheless entangled. The drawings on the panoramas brought forward the conflicts between the different actors, which can also be seen as multiplicities of voices. Moreover, issues of accessibility, lack of public furniture and fears around privatisation were made evident (Figures 30 and 31). Through the panoramas and additions or erasures of the participating actors, I was able to identify the agency of the existing objects within the square. For example, the agency of Manolis the tree and of the bench in front of the tree was highlighted by the anarchists and anti-authoritarians. Furthermore, the panoramas uncovered the agency of the church when seen as an object, but also as an institution. Lastly, the drawings revealed the agency of the benches.

The second intervention comprised a set of ten coffee shop chairs. Each chair bore a speech bubble inviting people to move them around, marking the new position each time. (Figure 32). The coffee shop chairs, as an object, were a contested object themselves, bearing a strong sense of power. These chairs, once the symbol of the traditional coffee shops in the area, had been appropriated by the new coffee shops, which at time were taking over the public space. By using these chairs as public furniture in this second intervention, I anticipated to trigger active co-existence between the different actors of the square. The agency of the chairs prompted a discussion around the publicness of the square, and acted as a trigger for imagining how the space once was, or could have been (Figure 33).

In Scenographic Intervention No. 3, the agency came from the public bench that had been returned temporarily to the square by the local authority. The public

bench was a powerful tool that sparked a discussion in the community about the publicness of the square. This object was appropriated and celebrated by the intervention. The bench was used as a table to host a group of coffee shop regulars and anarchists who debated the publicness, the accessibility and the future of Phaneromeni Square (Figure 35).

*Narrativity and authorship*

Manzini's (2015, 2019) assertion on the term designer and on the role of the designer as trigger poses the question of authorship, or co-authorship. As in social art practices, when communities are invited to participate in the design process of a work, authorship ceases to apply solely to the artist. When the participating actors, as Manzini points out, factor in the "open-ended co-design process", they also obtain or share the authorship of the project. Authorship, in artistic practices, depends on the existence of a recognisable product. Initially in this chapter, I argued that, within performance design, there is an apparent author. When using performance design as a methodology, as proposed by this enquiry, the authorship can be shared between the designer and the actors. This gives a sense of autonomy within a project both to the designer and to the actors. This framework has been used in this investigation's design experiments. Specifically, the framework is used within the planning process and delivering of the scenographic interventions.

The history the space is constructed within the embodied knowledge that both myself brought forward and the audience were called to share through their interaction with the intervention, are what this investigation refers to as *narrativity*. Grimaldi (2018) defines narrativity as the quality of narrative that is presented within an experience. In all three interventions, the participating actors where invited to share narratives, experiences and insights in relation to the square. Thus, the actor becomes an author by providing us with the narrativity.

In the case of this investigation, authorship initially emanates from the designer, who shares the given narratives and transmits them through the scenographic

interventions. When the actors decide to engage with the interventions, they become co-authors, and the intervention becomes the vessel for the dissemination of the narrative.

In the first intervention, this is achieved through the actors' input on the panoramas. In the second intervention, the authorship is realised when the actors challenge the boundaries and accessibility of the square, by crossing the red-dotted line or by placing chairs within the church gates.

### 5.2.2 Building the toolkit

These notions, as examined above, have become the framework for the conceived tools. The assemblage of these tools is what forms the Toolkit for Scenographic Interventions (Figure 37). The toolkit breaks down the thinking behind the making of the interventions. I maintain that this toolkit can act as a research method and be employed by performance design, when used as a methodology, within social art practices in the urban milieu. Moreover, it can be used as a pedagogical tool when introducing practice-based research in public spaces, notions of intervention in the public realm and socially engaged art practices within scenography, arts, architecture and urban design.

The toolkit comprises a set of eight cards.[20] The first and the last cards are diagrams illustrating the thinking process behind the interventions. The other six cards form the tools. Each tool acts as a set of guidelines. When the six tools are combined, they generate a scenographic intervention (Figure 38).

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[20] For the complete Toolkit for Scenographic Interventions, see Appendix 6.
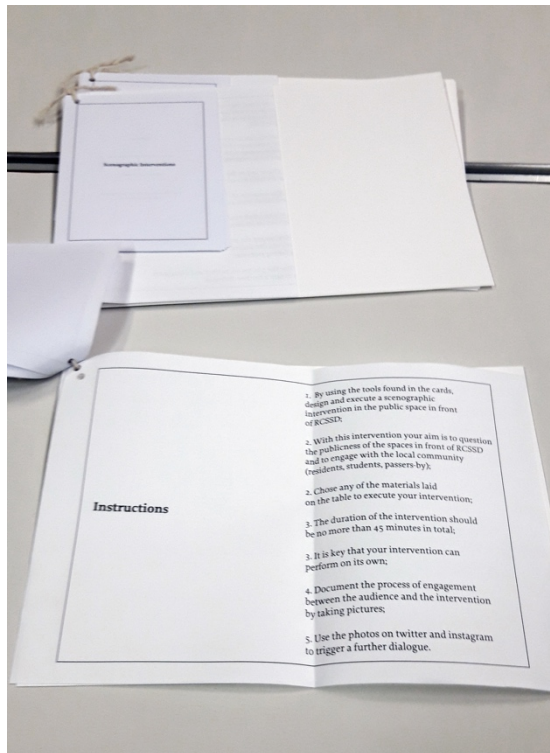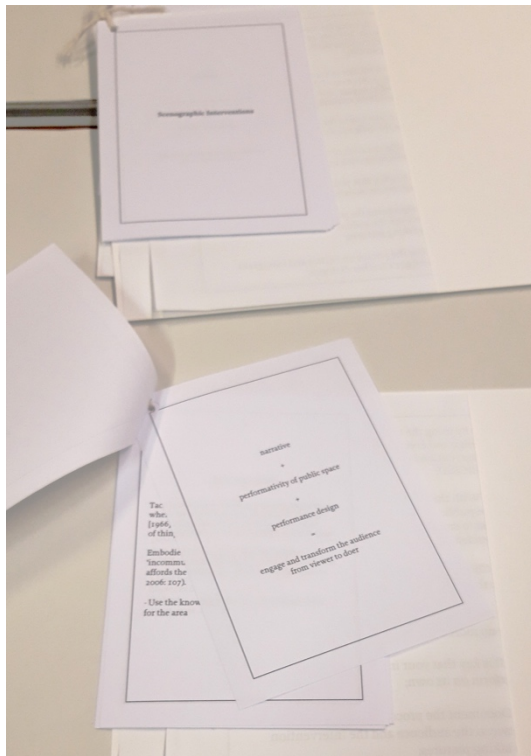
*Figure 37.* Printed toolkits. Source. Photograph by author. October 2019.

**Scenographic Interventions**

---

narrative

+

performativity of public space

+

performance design

=

engage and transform the audience
from viewer to doer

---

1.

**Tacit knowledge**

∗ Use the knowledge that you may already
have for the area

∗ Use any stories, anecdotes, experiences
related to the area, you may know more
than you can tell.

∗ Use any embodied knowledge you have
from the area, memories of your's
and other peoples movement ;
memories of touch, smell, sound.

---

2.

**Reading the space**

∗ Look for entrances and exits.

∗ Examine the flow of people in the space
(where do they come from? where are they
going? how fast are they moving? are they
stopping? where are they stopping?).

∗ Look for boardes and barriers in the space
(these can be elevated pavements,
changes of elements and materials: i.e peb-
bled stones, grass, asphalt).

---

3.

**Invitation & Engagement**

∗ How is your intervention speaking
to the actors ?

∗ How are the actors invited to interact
with the intervention?

∗ How are the actors being engaged?

---

4.

**Agency**

∗ Which is the agency of the space ?

∗ Which is the agency of the
exhisting objects within the space?

∗ Which is the agency of the objects
used for this intervention ?

---

5.

**Authorship**

∗ Who is telling the story?

∗ How is the story being told?

∗ Which is the relationship of the actors
to the narrative?

∗ How are the actors contributing
to the narrative of this intervention?

---

6.

**Comfort & Sense of Trust**

∗ How can this intervention create
a sense of trust and build a relationship
with the actors?

∗ By creating a comfortable environment
for the participants through your interven-
tion it is easier to gain the actor's trust.

---

space

body ←———→ time

material

*Figure 38.* Toolkit cards, as used during the workshops. Source. Author's own.

### 5.2.3 Testing the toolkit

The toolkit has been tested during two practical workshops with groups of HEI students from the UK and Cyprus. The workshops aimed to test the toolkit in the site of research (Phaneromeni Square, south walled city of Nicosia, Cyprus) and gauge its performance as a pedagogical tool. These aims and the process and outcomes of the two workshops feed into each other.

*Workshop No. 1*

The first workshop took place during COLLISIONS, a doctoral festival hosted by the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (RCSSD), in October 2019. The participants of the workshop were MA and PhD students, from scenography, applied theatre and social art backgrounds. The workshop aimed to share and test for the first time the tools that had been developed by this investigation. Although the workshop did not take place in Phaneromeni Square in Nicosia, the adapted site was an exceptional platform to test the tools and receive feedback within an academic environment. Furthermore, this process offered an opportunity to test the toolkit in an urban environment, differentiated geographically and socially.

For this workshop, I was allocated a seminar room, and the public spaces in front of RCSSD. The seminar room was used to introduce the workshop and for a feedback session at the end. During a short presentation at the beginning of the workshop, I introduced the research project, the tools and the notion of active co-existence. The participants were then divided in three groups of five and were asked to use the tools in order to plan and execute small scenographic interventions in the public spaces in front of the RCSSD. Other than the tools, the participants were given a set of instructions for the execution of their interventions. Upon the completion of the interventions, the groups returned to the seminar room, where we had a feedback session. The aim of this session was to discuss the experience and outcomes of the scenographic interventions, as well as to collect feedback on the tools.

The objective within the set of instructions handed out to the workshop participants was for the interventions to question the publicness of the spaces in

which the interventions were set to take place. The public spaces were chosen in collaboration with the RCSSD representatives, who were producing the COLLISIONS festival. On the day of the workshop, I was told that area residents had asked the RCSSD students to not loiter in these spaces. This resulted in the workshop participants moving the interventions into the university's 'public' spaces, rather than using the initially allocated spaces (Figures 39 to 41). This action allowed the interventions to trigger a discussion around the notion of publicness, of public spaces, and question "whose space" it is. The way that the interventions were implemented following the new guidelines that we received from the RCSSD administration prompted a development in one of the tools within the toolkit. Two of the groups used chairs from the school as part of their intervention and had to move them out of the public space into the public grounds of the institution. This action suggested that I should revisit the 'agency' card within the toolkit. Through the interventions, we should also consider the power that is given to the object from the actor. In this case, by the administration of the institution that was following the local government guidelines, based on the residents' requests.

*Figure 39.* This was the outline of the spot that the intervention originally planned to stand. Still from the COLLISIONS workshop. Source. Photograph by Holly Revell. October 2019.



**Figure 40.** This intervention took the form of a protest. When the participants were told that they were not allowed to use the public space and had to move their intervention to the spaces of the university, they personified the intervention, and had it say that it was prevented from being where it originally wanted to stand. Still from COLLISIONS workshop. Source. Photograph by Holly Revell. October, 2019.

*Figure 41.* This group of participants followed the university's guidelines and moved their intervention into the school's spaces, by putting behind bars the furniture they aimed to offer to the public as seats during the intervention.
Still from COLLISIONS workshop. Source. Photograph by author. October 2019.

The second workshop took place in Phaneromeni Square with a group of BA Fine Art students. Similarly to the first workshop, the students were introduced to the research project and thesis terminology. The format of the workshop was the same as the previous one. Following the introduction, the students were divided into three groups and asked to plan and carry out their interventions. Upon the completion of their interventions, the students were called back and asked to discuss their experience and share their observations with regards the toolkit. The introduction and feedback sessions in this instance took place at the Kala Kathoumena coffee shop, which was the first coffee shop in the area and is situated next to the square.

This workshop took place on a quiet winter day, and coincidentally the two coffee shops that usually take over the public space in the square were closed. Therefore, there was very little activity on that day. This allowed for the workshop to reveal elements about the agency of the space and the agency of the objects in the square: the power of the coffee shops when open, the agency of the coffee shop furniture.

After the completion of the two workshops, the observations made during the workshops, and the feedback received by the participants, the toolkit was revised to include the agency of the designer and that of the actor (Figure 44).

***Figure 42.*** One of the coffee shops in Phaneromeni Square in the process of refurbishment. Source. Photograph by Lefteris Ioannides. February 2020.



***Figure 43.*** Workshop participants, exploring the agency of objects through their scenographic intervention. Still from workshop in Phaneromeni Square with UNic BA FA students. Source. Photograph by Lefteris Ioannides. February 2020.

**Scenographic Interventions**

narrative

+

performativity of public space

+

performance design

=

engage and transform the audience
from viewer to doer

1.

**Tacit knowledge**

* Use the knowledge that you may already
have for the area

* Use any stories, anecdotes, experiences
related to the area, you may know more
than you can tell.

* Use any embodied knowledge you have
from the area, memories of your's
and other peoples movement ;
memories of touch, smell, sound.

2.

**Reading the space**

* Look for entrances and exits.

* Examine the flow of people in the space
(where do they come from? where are they
going? how fast are they moving? are they
stopping? where are they stopping?).

* Look for boardes and barriers in the space
(these can be elevated pavements,
changes of elements and materials: i.e peb-
bled stones, grass, asphalt).

3.

**Invitation & Engagement**

* How is your intervention speaking
to the actors ?

* How are the actors invited to interact
with the intervention?

* How are the actors being engaged?

4.

**Agency**

* Which is the agency of this space?

* Which is the agency of the
existing objects within the space?

* Which is the agency of the objects
used for this intervention ?

* Which is the agency of the object
given by the bodies?

* What type of agency do the actors

5.

**Authorship**

* Who is telling the story?

* How is the story being told?

* Which is the relationship of the actors
to the narrative?

* How are the actors contributing
to the narrative of this intervention?

6.

**Comfort & Sense of Trust**

* How can this intervention create
a sense of trust and build a relationship
with the actors?

* By creating a comfortable environment
for the participants through your interven-
tion it is easier to gain the actor's trust.

space

body | time

material

*Figure 44.* Iterations of toolkit cards.
Source. Author's own.

### 5.3 Insights

In this chapter's introduction, I point out how the design experiments are set to examine the square as a conceived space and argue that the scenographic interventions, created as part of this enquiry, can be seen as triggering acts through place orientation. Revisiting the scenographic interventions, through a process of iteration, I have been able to extract key information with regards to this argument.

The three scenographic interventions generated a series of opportunities for new multiplicities of phenomena by prompting the actors' bodies to be placed in different ways within and with the square, both in an imagined, as well as a physical way. The presence of the three-wheeled bicycle and my invitation for the actors to engage with the panoramas during *Re*-Design Phaneromeni created a disruption of flow. The actors stopped at points within the square that they normally would not, and situated their bodies in relation to the space, objects and buildings in order to interact with the panoramas. Their personal interventions on the panoramas constructed a plurality of new imaginings for Phaneromeni: adding elements to the square such as trees or public furniture, or by putting a cross over the church gates, religious symbols, mnemonic elements and symbols of the division. Similarly, the second and third interventions created new imaginings for the public space; a public space that was, or could have been. In the case of sit.move.play, this was achieved through the chairs that momentarily replaced the public benches and played with the boundaries of the public versus the private. At the round table discussion, we were able to temporarily appropriate a public bench and turn it into an arena for open debate. This reflects Marchart's (2019, p.88) assertion on the power of the human body in "carving-out the social" in a public space.

Through these triggering acts, we can approach the square as a conceived space. If we perceive Phaneromeni as a mediator, then we can argue that the agency of this space moulds according to the changes that occur within time, but also according to the perception of the different actors, and the multiplicities of phenomena constructed by the scenographic interventions. These new phenomena are what I

call triggers within this enquiry. The need for active co-existence as introduced in Chapter 2 and enriched in Chapters 3 and 4, calls for multiplicities within the urban milieu, in order to evade homogenisation and preserve the actors' social roles and opinions. Here, I argue that through the acts of the scenographic interventions, as interpreted above, we can maintain active co-existence, and by extension the agonistic interaction and plurality of the actors of Phaneromeni.

This project – considered from the start as site specific in nature – was born through my interest in Phaneromeni Square. As a site-specific project, it responds solely to Phaneromeni Square and cannot be taken out of its context. The chairs, for example, cannot be taken and placed on another square, as the intervention was designed based on the information gathered from Phaneromeni. This is what makes it an act of place orientation and what makes it scenographic. The specific positioning of the specific chair, into the square, behind the red dotted line in the specific time. Equally, the same intervention would not have the same outcome or effect today as it did in 2014. This reinforces my argument that the scenographic interventions are temporal and that Phaneromeni Square, and other contested public spaces with similar characteristics of privatisation and neoliberalisation, should be approached as spatio-temporal events.

What can be taken out and implemented elsewhere is the methodology – hence the toolkit. The toolkit, which includes a set of instructions, comes with a sole restriction: the scenographic intervention must be able to perform on its own, without any form of enactment or re-enactment from the maker. This allows the designer to examine in depth the agencies of space, object and body. The designer is able to position themselves in relation to the intervention and the chosen contested space and community, through the invitation to use tacit knowledge. This is strengthened by the process of iteration, which provides for a deeper understanding of the space and the actors.

The process of iteration enabled me to apply a mode of self-reflexivity within the project. This allowed for space to acknowledge my own position and affectivity within the wider context of Phaneromeni Square. Moreover, it allowed space and

time for reviewing the processes used throughout the design experiments and better understanding the role of the designer as trigger and its autonomous character. The interventions, the toolkit and the workshops informed us that the performance designer can act as an agent for social change. Through small triggering acts, the designer can enable imaginings and maintain active co-existence. This process led me to write the manifesto for the role of the performance designer (Figures 45 and 46).

**Performance Design is NOT a decorative form of representation.**

**Performance Design does not need spectators to exist.**

Performance Design is
an interdisciplinary form of practice that
engages with current social and political
issues and creates forms of manifestation
for social transformation.

*Figure 45.* The Manifesto for the Role of the Performance Designer. Page 1/2. Source. Author's own.

## The Performance Designer

dares to leave the theatrical confines and wander in the urban fabric.

**is autonomous.**

**is an individual thought provoking creative entity.**

**is not an instrument.**
**is not instrumentalised.**
**is an instrument.**

**makes site-specific interventions.**

**does not make mnemonic, permanent interventions.**
**does not use props and does not commodify objects.**
**grants agency to the object through the scenographic act.**

**makes interventions that are temporal.**
**that trigger active co-existence,**
**and do not seek for consensus.**

**intervenes in the contested urban realm.**

**does not stand for sensationalisation, regeneration, privatisation.**

## For the Performance Designer

**space is social.**

**space is a temporal event.**

**space is political.**

**space is never empty.**

*Figure 46.* The Manifesto for the Role of the Performance Designer. Page 2/2. Source. Author's own.

## Conclusion

## The performance designer as trigger

Situated within the arts and humanities, the thesis aimed to establish how performance design can expand into a more critical field through theory and practice, away from theatrical confines, by drawing from social art practice. Through interventions, it aimed to trigger active co-existence in contested public spaces. The overriding research question for this enquiry asked how performance design can contribute towards enabling active co-existence in the redeveloped, contested public spaces of the south walled city of Nicosia, in Cyprus. To do so, the investigation looked at the field of scenography and the theory and practice of social art practice. Furthermore, it sought to define the term active co-existence, through practice-led research and research-led practice, and support it with a set of theoretical frameworks. In this final chapter, I will draw together the threads of the arguments I made throughout this enquiry. I will review the aims of the thesis and examine the findings and conclusions deriving from each chapter. I will go on to discuss the contributions to knowledge and point out the different levels of contribution of this enquiry (theoretical, methodological and practice-based). Lastly, I will discuss the potential for further research and reach the conclusions of this investigation.

To build a cohesive argument throughout the thesis, each chapter responded to one of the research sub-questions (section 0.1.1) that were derived from the overarching question of the thesis. The first chapter sought to determine how social art practice can inform performance design. To attain this, I first examined the field of study: the expanding field of scenography, and by extent, the field of performance design. To remind the reader, performance design is considered to be an expanded form – a 'home' – of scenographic practice. In Chapter 1, I discussed the current tendency of the field to move outside of theatrical orthodoxies and explore more independent applications. By this, I interrogated the potentiality of a further expanding practice. With this inclination as a point of departure, I argued that performance design can be used as an interventional methodology within the

contested urban milieu. It is at this point that I deployed the literature and a practical review of social art practice, a field with a penchant for radical thinking. The discussion on social art practice focused on its political character within the urban realm and a key element within the practice: site specificity. This discussion allowed me to highlight the current problematics around site specificity and its instrumentalisation by neoliberal local authorities. By depicting the methodological paradigms of contemporary practices, such as that of Jeanne van Heeswijk and Freee Art Collective, I deliberated the political potential of performance design through the making of spatial temporalities. To address the thesis research question and the gaps in knowledge highlighted in the first chapter, I concluded the chapter by proposing to re-claim, or perhaps re-address the terms site specificity, autonomy and instrumentalisation.

To examine how performance design can be used as a methodology in the contested urban fabric and to support the role of the performance designer as trigger, I built a set of conceptual frameworks. The schema was motivated by the interdisciplinary character of the performance designer, my understanding of social art practice as a field pivoting between arts and humanities, and the insights brought forward from the literature on spatial temporalities. To build the enquiry's frameworks, I deployed theories from cultural geography, sociology, and radical democracy. Chapter 2 examined notions of space as a social product, and public space and its privatisation; it also discussed the notion of the designer and their role in relation to the aforementioned concepts. To examine these concepts, I deployed the theories of Henri Lefebvre on social space and Doreen Massey's argument that space is entangled with time. Through these theories, I built the key framework, which forms a core research method for the investigation, specifically for the examination of the socio-politically complex south walled city of Nicosia and for Phaneromeni Square. In the same chapter, I introduced the new concept of active co-existence, which is supported by the theory of Chantal Mouffe on agonism and the political. This new concept forms a key argument for the methodological approach of the performance designer in the contested urban realm.

In the third chapter, I introduced the south walled city of Nicosia and argued that it should be addressed as a spatio-temporal event in order to dissect the complexity of the post-conflict, divided city. Through a historical review, I discussed how the walled city became a periphery, later providing the perfect landscape for a controlled regeneration. I argued that, due to the longevity of the ethno-national matter and its effect on Cypriot society, creative practice on the island is largely focused around the Buffer Zone and the trauma brought by the conflict. The ethno-national matter thus side-lines other socio-political issues affecting the island and its capital, including the state-led gentrification that this enquiry highlights. Here, I deliberated on the role of social art, including its input in relation to the ethno-national matter, and made a link with the problematics discussed in Chapter 1. As it is very easy for art to be instrumentalised to serve agendas of large institutions, I sought to raise concern around using art to sensationalise a contested area such as the walled city of Nicosia. The chapter addressed artistic paradigms that use the walled city of Nicosia as their key subject and examined the latter's urban fabric since 2005. Tselika's practice-based research (Tselika, 2018), the Buffer Fringe Festival and the U-A-W project, for example, resist such instrumentalisation. The investigation draws from the ethics applied within these examples. Throughout the thesis, the discussion around instrumentalisation and sensationalisation resurfaced and was interrogated via multiple routes.

Chapters 4 and 5 discussed the methodology of this enquiry and examined the practice that I developed during this investigation. Using the case study of Phaneromeni Square, I considered how performance design is explored as a methodological tool outside of theatrical orthodoxies, in the contested urban site. The practice-led research allowed me to examine a rapidly regenerated and pacified square; a space that was once one of multiplicities, transformed into a set-like, homogenised public space. Through the interrogation of the spatio-temporal event and by an assemblage of inter-disciplinary research methods, I identified the active agencies of and within the square. This process led me to determine the urgency of active co-existence and build the main framework for the role of the

performance designer as trigger. Drawing from Rachel Hann's conceptions on the scenographic and on place orientation, I designed the scenographic interventions, forming a central element to this practice-based research, and reinforcing my hypothesis for the political role of performance design when used as a methodology within the contested urban milieu. In Chapter 5, I discussed the development process of the interventions, and how they led to the creation of the toolkit and the manifesto for the role of the performance designer. The manifesto – presented at the end of Chapter 5 – forms part of this enquiry's contribution to knowledge and will be discussed in the following pages in further detail.

**An iterative mode of practice-led research and research-led practice**
The investigation was designed around a process of iteration that allowed to interweave the theory and practice, and to refine the findings of this enquiry. Initially, this method was introduced to the practice-based research as part of the research design and was considered to be a mapping method for the investigation. Its purpose was to help me navigate through the literature and the practice of the investigation. Furthermore, I planned to use the process of iteration to manage the timeframe of this PhD project, which took place over a seven-year span. Almost seamlessly, this method found its way into my practice and was built into the performance design methodology. Moreover, by the process of iteration, we are able to see how the theoretical frameworks of this investigation interconnected and provided us with the theoretical, methodological and practical outcomes of this thesis.

The method of iteration, as a mode of practice, has allowed me to introduce a fundamental approach of self-reflexivity to my practice and to test assumptions. By iterating every step in the process of design and execution of this project's interventions, I was able to test assumptions made in the initial stages of the research. As discussed extensively in Chapter 5, the experimental and iterative nature of the interventions provided the thesis with insights with regards to the socio-political conflicts in the contested site of Phaneromeni Square.

**Interweaving theory and practice**

To respond to the overarching question, and in turn build the performance design methodology for active co-existence, I employed the post-disciplinary mode of the field and the interdisciplinary character of social art practice. By this, I was able to approach the literature and theoretical review through the fields of cultural geography, sociology, radical democracy and socially engaged design. This allowed me to build a rich set of frameworks to help me navigate through the practice-led research and research-led practice. This was along the lines of Massey's notion of the spatio-temporal event. The deployment of this conception was fruitful for the investigation on multiple levels. Firstly, it allowed me to examine in depth the site of research, and understand the socio-political complexities deriving from the conflictual history of Nicosia. Secondly, the notion of the spatio-temporal event responded to performance design, a field that deals with space and time through narratives. By bringing this knowledge forward and in combination with Hann's concepts of place orientation and the scenographic, I was able to develop the scenographic interventions, which, as I have argued in Chapter 5, create multiplicities of new phenomena and are seen as triggering acts for active co-existence. Lastly, the notion of the spatio-temporal event helped contribute towards an expanded understanding of site specificity and the new notion of active co-existence.

The problematic with site specificity, as pointed out in the Introduction through Deutsche's models (the assimilative model and the interruptive model), can often be that the artwork is tailored to 'fit' with the existing environment, and thus becomes an instrument of the local governing bodies and development companies. In Chapter 1, I pointed out that, while there is a long history of site specificity within social art practice, there is a lack of attention towards the power that can be brought forward from the objects, the space, and the bodies within it. Furthermore, as I argued in Chapter 3, site specificity often results in the exploitation and sensationalisation of a space, a place, or a society, and the proliferation of public art that has a patriarchal approach or simply does not resonate with the community. Accordingly, a problematic can be the non-

positioning of the artist in relation to the project and by extent the site. Through the discussion that occurred from the evaluation of the scenographic interventions, I argued that site specificity should always be seen as a practice linked to space and time, the 'here' and 'now', and therefore should be treated as a temporal mode of practice.

### The role of the performance designer

The Manifesto for the Role of the Performance Designer declares that "the Performance Designer makes site-specific interventions" and at the same time does not make interventions that are permanent or mnemonic; the performance designer makes interventions that are temporal. Performance design is a practice created for and within space, therefore site is an important element. At the same time, we should remember that scenography – and by extent performance design – is traditionally a time-based practice. What we should address here is not the problematic of making work specifically for a site, but the approach of doing so; the 'how'. The how is provided by one of the thesis' practice-based outcomes: the toolkit for scenographic interventions.

My argument throughout this thesis – to perceive the performance designer as social agent – leads me to address again the definition of performance design that was introduced by Hannah and Harsløf (2008). Their definition provides us with an inclusive and somewhat open term, which allows space for interpretation. The new proposition allows us to expand the field further. As a result, the hypothesis made in Chapter 1, with regards to reclaiming the notions mentioned above, and the iterative process of this practice-based enquiry, led to the creation of the manifesto.

This short manifesto comes to conclude the practice that was developed through this enquiry. It declares my intentions and views as a performance designer who practices within the socially engaged realm and campaigns for a shift towards an independent, engaging, active and political practice, within the contested urban milieu. With this manifesto, I contribute towards the application of performance

design outside of theatrical orthodoxies, encouraging its use as a methodology within a wider practice for social change. This proclamation can be seen as an invitation for other practitioners within the field to move their knowledge and skills into the urban fabric, and use them as political acts, to achieve change and social engagement within the public realm. Moreover, the manifesto is a contribution to existing practices, such as the practice of Tanja Beer through her ecoscenography project and the practice of Sigrid Merx within Platform Scenography.

This thesis, drawing from the currently expanding field of scenography, emphasises the move of performance design outside of theatrical orthodoxies, to be applied into the urban realm. Throughout the thesis I argue that performance design can have an autonomous character, away from text- or performance-based events. Through the discussion which takes my manifesto as a point of departure, I propose an expanded understanding for the term performance design, through which I claim that performance designers should be autonomous and use their methodologies as instruments for social change within site specificity. This iterated understanding of the field of performance design is based on its political agency and potentiality. By this emphasis, there is a contribution to a methodological development, which addresses the notion of site specificity, informed by a new insight for the locus, and the agencies that can be identified within it (space, time, bodies and objects). The element of the 'how' and the positioning of the performance designer within the site-specific project form a fundamental methodological contribution. This is implied by the application of tacit knowledge, self-reflexivity and, most importantly, the process of iteration.

The manifesto claims that the performance designer is autonomous and then goes on to say: "The Performance Designer is not an instrument; the Performance Designer is not instrumentalised; the Performance Designer is an instrument". These two declarations are of a dual nature. At a first reading, we can argue that the declaration on autonomy refers to the autonomisation of the designer, away from the theatrical institutions and the confines of a narrative-based performative event or dramatic forms of representation. At the same time, we should approach

'autonomous' in terms of its political nature. Through the new understanding of performance design, the designer is prompted to practice in the urban fabric. In this instance, autonomy refers to the individual initiative of the performance designer, and breaking away from the dominant ideas that arise from neoliberal tactics. In the instance of my own practice and this practice-based research, being autonomous refers to my own positioning and reflexivity in relation to Phaneromeni Square and the character of the scenographic interventions. Equally, 'instrument' and 'instrumentalisation' can refer to my positioning in relation to the local authority and the church. Here, I should also add that the performance designer does not 'instrumentalise', referring to the relation that the designer and any project should have with the community. For instance, in the case of Phaneromeni Square, the groups of anarchists, anti-authoritarians and antifascists, and their presence in the square, while significant for the period that the research and design experiments were taking place, do not become a commodified object for the purposes of creating a more sympathetic project.

What the manifesto claims, is that the performance designer can become an instrument, by taking the methodology that is embedded within a dramaturgical tradition, and shifting it and sharing it. When performance design is taken outside the theatrical realm and applied as a methodology within social art practices focusing in the urban environment, it can contribute towards the political role of the field. In this way, the performance designer as instrument is able to diffuse skills and raise questions, through the production of small temporary interventional acts. In Chapters 4 and 5, as a result of this enquiry's research-through-practice, the interdisciplinary nature of the performance designer is made apparent. In Chapter 4, we saw the performance designer investigating in depth a specific site and the community around it by adopting the approaches of an ethnographer, a sociologist and an urban designer, whilst using dramaturgical and narratological analytical skills deriving from theatrical practices. Pamela Howard reminds us that "a scenographer is by nature a cultural magpie, delighting in the search for the ephemera of history and sociology" (2002, p.35). In Chapter 5, we saw the performance designer, making, deploying and producing

skills. By the creation of the scenographic interventions and the toolkit, which I assert are small triggering acts, the designer acts as an agent for social change, and through their practice enables and maintains active co-existence. The toolkit is an instrument that allows others to interpret and use the methodology. At the same time, it allows the user to examine their autonomous character and their positioning in relation to the project.

**The south walled city of Nicosia and Phaneromeni Square as the research focus**

To determine the political potential of the performance designer beyond theatrical confines, I chose to focus on the south walled city of Nicosia. This emerged out of a problematisation around the rapid regeneration of the area and the neoliberal tactics applied by the local government specifically to Phaneromeni Square, the selected site for this investigation.

From the beginning of this investigation, I identified a gap in the island's artistic and design practice, which is a result of the tendency to focus on the ethno-national matter and the Buffer Zone in Nicosia. As I discussed in Chapter 3, while there is a developing field of social art practice in Cyprus, the focus is generally around conflict transformation and peace-building, often neglecting other socio-political matters. For the past seven years, this investigation has focused on the contestation of Phaneromeni Square, thus contributing towards a broader discussion within the island on matters of gentrification, privatisation and the marginalisation of specific groups. This was achieved through the scenographic interventions, the dissemination of the discussion through local papers (Kyprianou, 2014), and the presentation of the case study in international and European symposia and conferences (see Appendix 8 for proceedings). Furthermore, data gathered during the practice-led research, specifically from the photo-documentation, the semi-structured interviews and archive collections, contributed towards other investigations and paper publications regarding the visual landscape of the walled city of Nicosia (Panayides and Hadjilouca, 2019). Moreover, this investigation expanded the field of scenography in Cyprus and

provided an alternative understanding of performance design, which currently sees the profession in relation to stage design, serving the sole purpose of a dramaturgical text and the vision of a director.

### The notion of active co-existence

Throughout this investigation, I have been building my argument towards the new notion of active co-existence, a term that has been leading this practice-led research from the initial stages as part of the overarching research question. From the second chapter, where I introduced this term, I have been enriching it through the discussions of the practice-led research and research-led practice of this investigation. Here, I argue that active co-existence is an umbrella term for multiplicities, deriving from practices focusing on the contested urban realm that is affected by neoliberal tactics. This umbrella term allows us to inform site specificity and helps us, through theory and practice, to decode a site. Active co-existence forms a home to the spatio-temporal event and to agonistic practices. As I suggested throughout this thesis, this term allows us to depict the different forms of conflict, spatial relations, and forms of power that unfold within the urban site. When we are speaking about active co-existence, we are not solely referring to the agonistic co-existence between social groups, citizens, and bodies within a contested space, but also to the co-existence of histories, spatial forms and elements. Furthermore, in the case of site specificity and social art practice, we are referring to the co-existence of the artist with the locale. Within the performance design methodologies that are used within the urban site, we are speaking about the co-existence of visual dramaturgies with space and time; the co-existence of agency of objects and that of bodies within space. I assert that this is a notion that can be applied within the fields of cultural geography, urbanism, performance design, and social art practice.

### Further research and future applications

Both the Toolkit for the Scenographic Interventions and the Manifesto for the Role of the Performance Designer can be seen as projective elements of this enquiry and means for further investigation. By using these apparatuses, we can

investigate how the field of performance design can feed back into social art practice and expand on the concepts of spatiality, and the agency of objects and bodies.

Furthermore, the dissemination of the manifesto and the toolkit within the field of scenography can build future collaborations and apply the new knowledge that has been developed in higher education and in other expanding areas of performance design, such as ecoscenography.

Lastly, keeping in mind the global pandemic that we are finding ourselves in over the past year, the scenographic interventions and the toolkit can also help us question the changes in our perception of public space and our movement in the urban milieu.

## An invitation

This proposition for a new understanding of performance design, and the claims to re-iterate the notions of autonomy, instrument, site specificity, and the local, is an invitation for new explorations of the field, new provocations and new imaginings for social change, of which active co-existence is an innovative example. The toolkit – through an interdisciplinary mode, and its four notions (the agency of space, tacit knowledge, the agency of objects, narrativity and authorship) – invites practitioners and researchers to explore the effects of autonomy, site specificity and the local within the contested urban milieu. Meanwhile, the manifesto invites performance designers to position themselves within the spectrum of social art practice.

Equally, I invite social art practitioners to use performance design to further inform their practice. We are currently faced with a wide range of systemic, social, economic, political and environmental challenges. Therefore, I argue that it is imperative to reassess our practices, and positionings within them, in order to be able to truly transform the things around us and be capable of acting in autonomy, away from dominant ideas and neoliberalised tactics. By the methods of site-specific, temporary scenographic interventions that are presented through this

enquiry, we are able to bring to the surface discourses of power and question how they are placed and manifested in today's social space. This is an invitation to apply performance design thinking for social change and social transformation. Performance design has the ability to grant agency to spaces, to objects and to bodies.

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**Appendix 1**

**Visualisation of iterative cycles informed by Thesis Map**

The research question changed from:

*"What methods can enable designers to act as triggers, in order to support active co-existence in the redeveloped contested public spaces, of the south walled city of Nicosia, Cyprus?"*
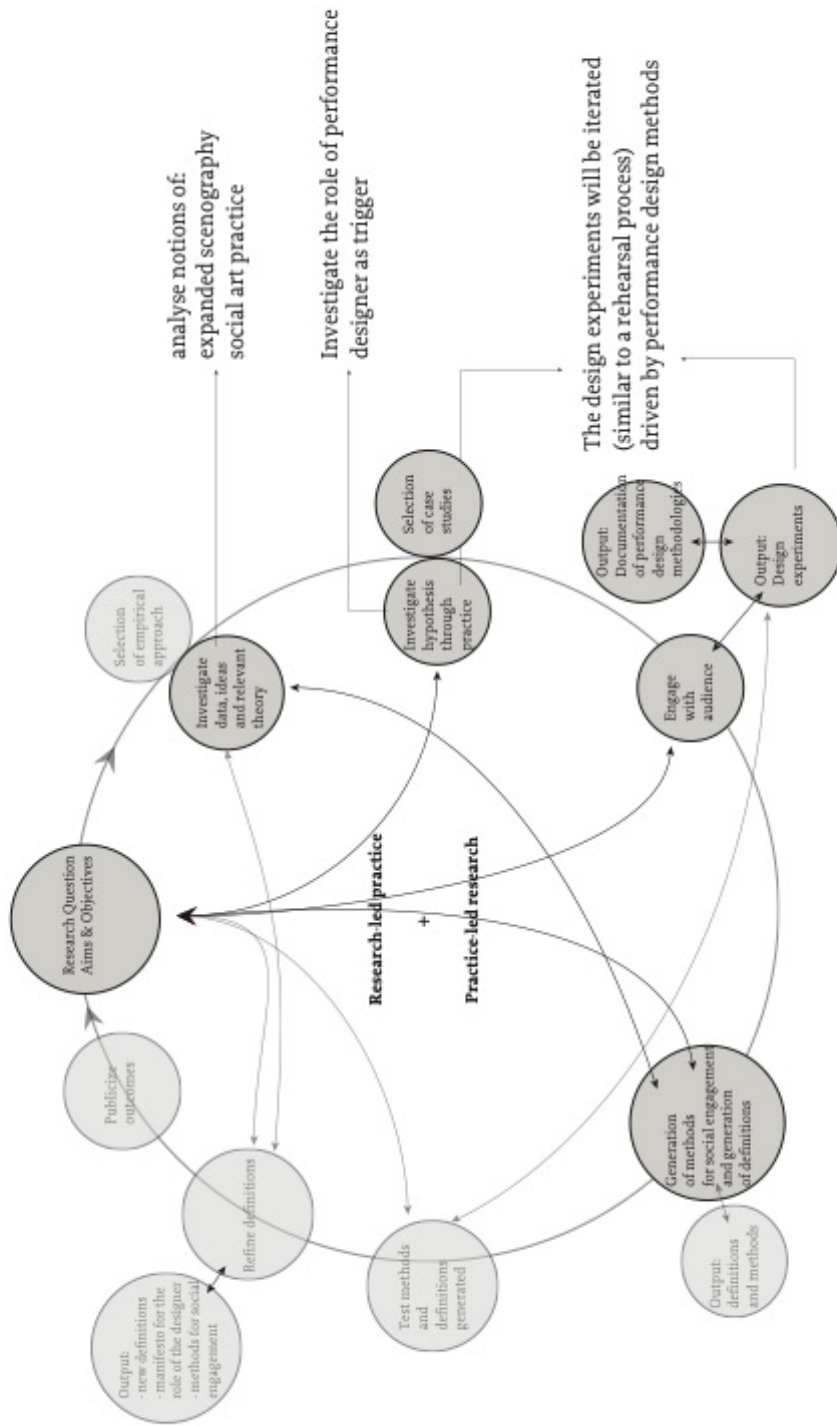
to:

*"How can performance design be used to trigger active co-existence in the regenerated contested public spaces, of the south walled city of Nicosia, Cyprus?"*
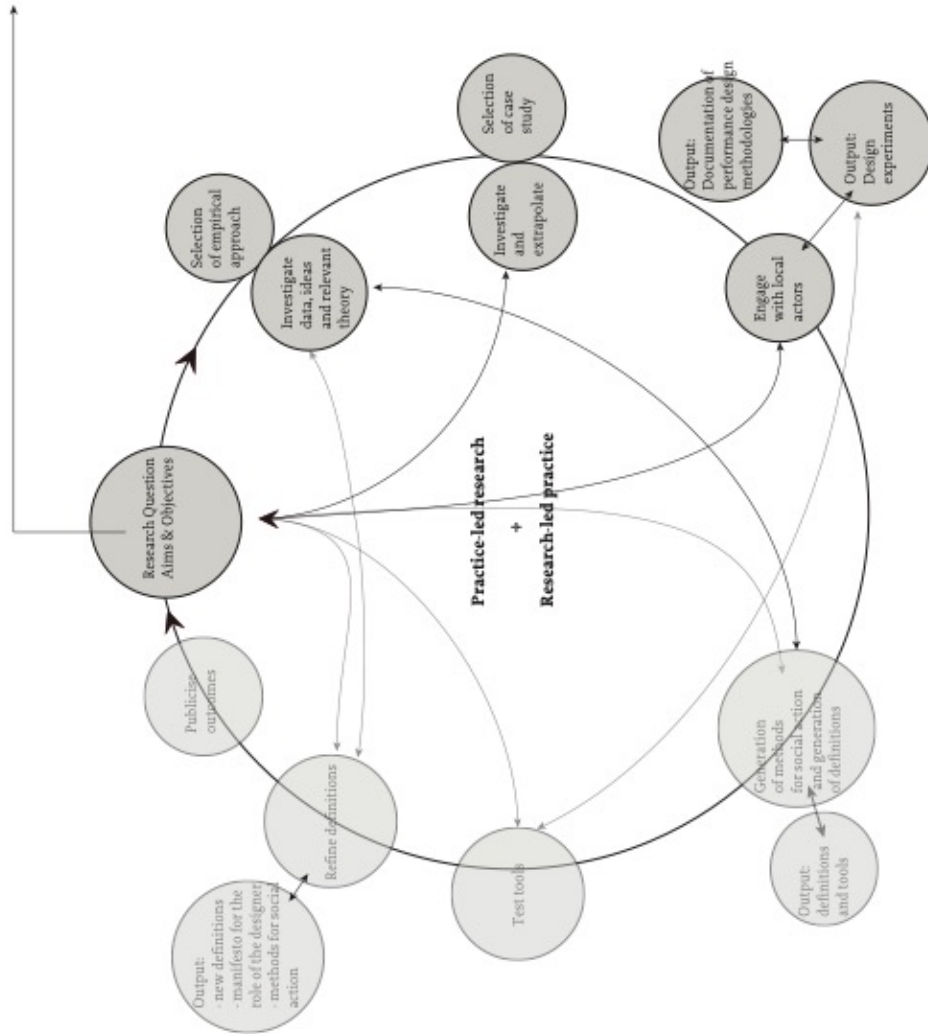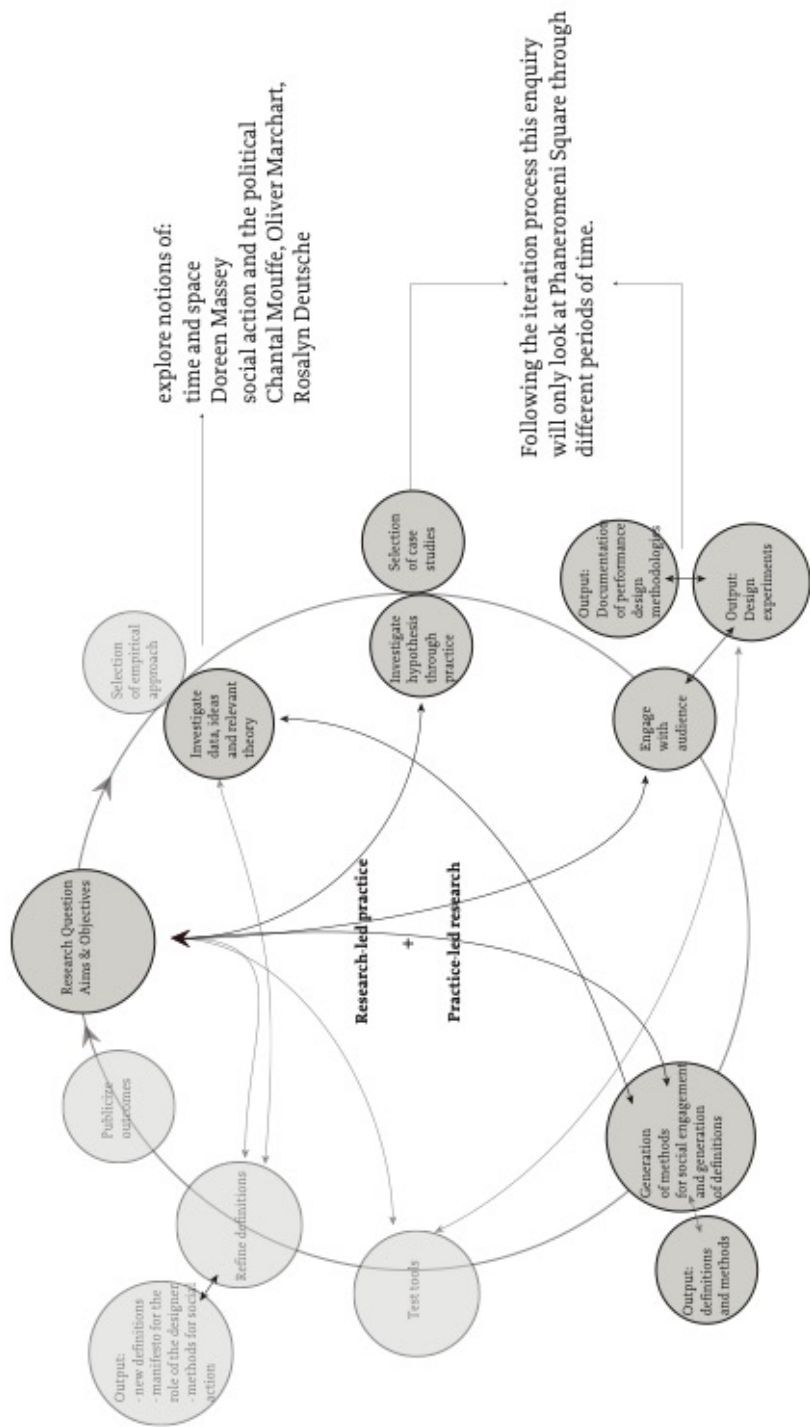
explore notions of:
time and space
Doreen Massey
social action and the political
Chantal Mouffe, Oliver Marchart,
Rosalyn Deutsche

Following the iteration process this enquiry
will only look at Phaneromeni Square through
different periods of time.

Selection of case studies

Investigate hypothesis through practice

Selection of empirical approach

Investigate data, ideas and relevant theory

Output: Documentation of performance design methodologies

Output: Design experiments

Engage with audience

Research Question Aims & Objectives

**Research-led practice**

**Practice-led research**

+

Publicize outcomes

Refine definitions

Test tools

Generation of methods for social engagement and generation of definitions

Output: definitions and methods

Output:
- new definitions
- manifesto for the role of the designer
- methods for social action

analyse notions of:
expanded scenography
social art practice

Investigate the role of performance
designer as trigger

The design experiments will be iterated
(similar to a rehearsal process)
driven by performance design methods

Selection
of case
studies

Output:
Documentation
of performance
design
methodologies

Output:
Design
experiments

Selection
of empirical
approach

Investigate
data, ideas
and relevant
theory

Investigate
hypothesis
through
practice

Engage
with
audience

Research Question
Aims & Objectives

Research-led practice
+
Practice-led research

Publicise
outcomes

Refine definitions

Generation
of methods
for social engagement
and generation
of definitions

Output:
- new definitions
- manifesto for the
role of the designer
- methods for social
engagement

Test methods
and
definitions
generated

Output:
definitions
and methods

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**Appendix 2**

**Selected photo-documentation, script and reflective log**

This appendix presents an example of the photo-documentation process of Phaneromeni Square as was conducted during the practice-led research. The examples are drawn from throughout the PhD project. For each instance, there is a driving script, followed by a selection of photographs and the reflective log.

**March 2013**

**Time of day: morning**

The script:

1. How is the Square being used in two different times of day (morning and night)?

2. How is the public space of the Square used? (are the actors using the square as a passage? are there events being held in the Square? are people using the public furniture?)

3. Who uses the public space of the Square?
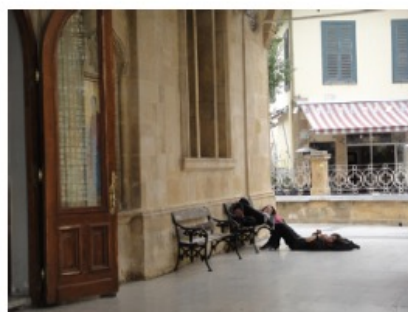
**March 2013**
**Time of day: morning**

**General notes and observations:**

The square is full of high school students, which is unusual for the time of day.

The pictures are taken a couple of days before a national holiday (the 25th of March). This would justify why so many students are in the square. Possibly the schools have allowed students to leave earlier on that day, as it often happens the day before a national bank holiday.

I visited the square intentionally at that time to take pictures, expecting that it would be quiet as it usually is during the mornings. I sat initially at the cafe in the corner -the new cafe that has opened in the square and has no name yet. After a while I walked around.

I took the pictures having the script in mind, trying to record the uses of the public furniture and the 'hubs' that were created.

**Reflections:**

The script was set before I went out to shoot and was asking:
1. How is the Square being used in two different times of day (morning and night)?

2. How is the public space of the Square used? (are the actors using the square as a passage? are there events being held in the Square? are people using the public furniture?)

3. Who uses the public space of the Square?

While normally the square on weekday mornings tends to be quiet, on this morning it is very busy, full of teenagers, who have taken over the space. There was a point where they started playing football. They seem to have created hubs around the public benches.

There are a few passers-by, mainly people who must going on their morning shopping. Some church goers are sitting on the benched that are placed next to the main entrance of the church.

**January 2014**

**Time of day: evening**

The script:

1. What banners do the groups of young activists, anarchists and antiauthoritarians hang in the Square?

2. In what form is conflict evident in the Square?

3. In what ways is the contestation of the Square evident in the fabric of the Square?

4. How is the Square changing in terms of commercialisation / privatisation?

January 2014
Time of day: evening

**General notes and observations:**

This night was the 15th of January, which marked the 64th anniversary to the referendum on 'enosis', unification, of Cyprus with Greece. On the same day a year ago the nationalist party ELAM had a march to commemorate the event, and one of their stops was Phaneromeni Church, seen as the symbol to the EOKA guerrilla war and the unification with Greece. One of my interviewees described that night during their interview and said how some of the young people who were hanging out in the square informed the Antifa group and a spontaneous anti-nationalist and anti-fascist gathering took place. This year the antiauthoritarian and Antifa groups shared an event on social media (Facebook) inviting everyone to be present in Phaneromeni Square and prevent any 'fascist' and nationalistic behaviours. Being aware of this gathering taking place I decided to be present and photograph the event.



the ELAM march on 15/1/2013.
Photograph downloaded from the ELAM webpage.

**Reflections:**

I did not devise a new script especially for this night. Instead, I used the same script I have been using for the past year.

The script was asking:
1.        What banners do the groups of young activists, anarchists and antiauthoritarians hang in the Square?
2.        In what form is conflict evident in the Square?
3.        In what ways is the contestation of the Square evident in the fabric of the Square?
4.        How is the square changing in terms of commercialisation / privatisation?

The last question was not addressed in this instance.

On this night there was a strong presence of banners in the Square, pasted on the buildings' walls and the gates of the church. Most of the banners looked as if they were made specifically for this night and some were a bit more generic. The banners pasted on the church's gates I believe acted as the centre piece.

On this night there was a strong presence of banners in the Square, pasted on the buildings' walls and the gates of the church, transforming instantly the visual landscape of the square. Most of the banners looked as if they were made specifically for this night and some were a bit more generic. The banners pasted on the church's gates I believe, acted as the centre piece. The one to the right of the photograph is saying (loosely translated) "not in Phaneromeni, and not anywhere, crush the fascists". The central one has a direct reference to the famous ¡No Pasaran! (referring to the french 'ils ne passeronts pas' from WWI and the spanish 'no pasarant; from 1936), referring directly to nationalist forces which 'shall not pass'.

While there is no physical conflict on this night it is still evident. ELAM did not appear in the end. There were roumors that the police prevented them from passing through Phaneromeni in order to

**January 2014**
**Time of day: evening**

avoid a conflict. The contestation of the square is manifested through the banners pasted around the square.

I am not sure what the two road cones dressed in cardigans have to do with this night, but I was urged to take a photograph as it reminded me other interventions in the space of Phaneromeni from the groups of young people. Could there be an element of performativity there?



photograph taken by author.
January 2014.

an improvised living room made by the young people hanging out in the square.
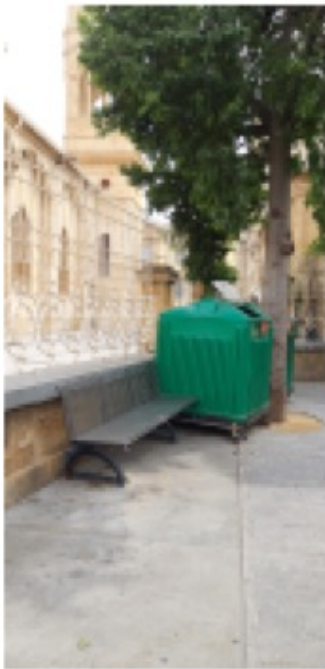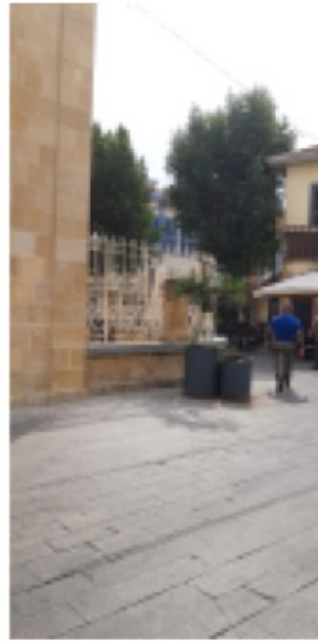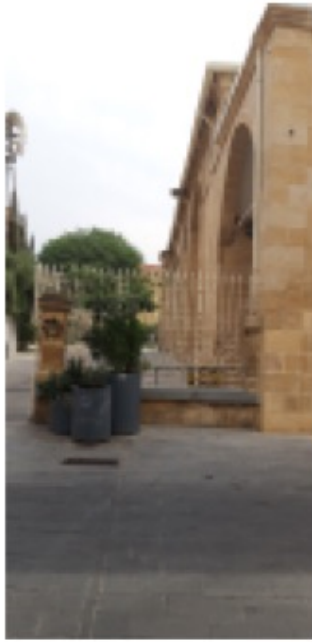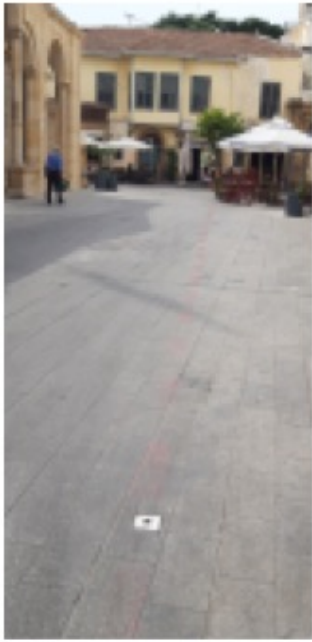The picture was shared with me with one of my interviewees who was also one of the creators of this installation.

**February 2020**

**Time of day: morning**

The script:

1. What changes may have occurred in Phaneromeni square since the last visit?

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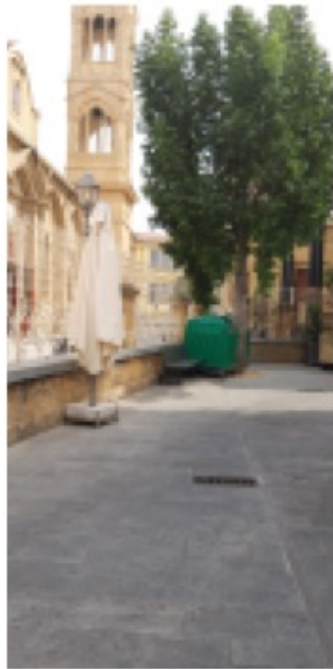
**General notes and observations:**

I visited Cyprus and Phaneromeni Square followed
by a four month gap where I was in the UK.

**Reflections:**

The script was asking:

1. What changes may have occurred in Phaneromeni square since the last visit?

It is a shock to see all benches removed, even the
ones that were brought back temporarily. They have
now been replaced by heavy, large plant pots. Manolis the tree is standing on its own now.

**Appendix 3**

**Selected transcribed interviews**

**Appendix 4**

**Intervention No. 1, Excel table**

Intervention No 1:
Re-design Phaneromeni,
school side

| A/A | Profession | Sex | Age | Ideas and thoughts | Status (noted by author on the day) / notes taken during the intervention |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Landscape architect | Female | 23 | The participant chose to draw and make notes on the panorama. She drew an adjustable bench, railing on the steps that can also be used as skateboard ramps and a tree with seating underneath. | The participant is a coffee-shop user. |
| 2 | / | Male | / (30 - 35) | The participant drew a big silver screen, for screenings after dark. | The participant is a coffee-shop user. |
| 3 | Graphic designer | Female | 25 | The participant drew more trees and noted that she would like to see beautiful benches with pillows near the trees. | The participant is a coffee-shop user. |
| 4 | Doctor & Trade marketing employee (two participants) | Male & Female | 30 & 24 | The participants drew benches and public sitting (chairs and tables), more trees and plants in pots. They also drew a second-hand market and recycle bins. | The participants are coffee-shop users. |
| 5 | Stylist | Male | 32 | The participant chose to erase buildings and elements that he did not like in the surrounding environment. | The participants are coffee-shop users. |
| 6 | Restaurant owner | Male | / | The participant wrote that he would like more trees in the Square. | The participant owns the restaurant *Matheos* in the Square and is also a resident of the area. During our conversation he mentioned that the council is not able to manage the area properly. |
| 7 | Student & Interior designer (two participants) | Female | 26 & 17 | The participants drew on the panorama trees on wheels and a bike rack. | The participants are coffee-shop users. |

Intervention No 1:
Re-design Phaneromeni,
church side

| A/A | Profession | Sex | Age | Ideas and thoughts | Status (noted by author on the day) / notes taken during the intervention |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Art teacher | Female | 43 | The participant drew on the panorama, added colour, green and lighting to the Square | Coffee-shop user |
| 2 | Painter | Male | 41 | The participant chose to write on the panorama and draw. His notes: 1. Where can we find joy, love, creativity, water. 2. No coffee shop tables that take-over the public space. 3. No motorbikes. 4. The Square should have swings and trees. 5. Colorful flour. 6. Water fountain. 7. Better lighting, well designed. 8. No flags. 9. The Church should not close its gates. 10. The Christmas decorations should not be there all year long. | Sits in the Square / uses the public space of the Square |
| 3 | Student | Female | 19 | The participant drew on the panorama and made notes. She would like more benches in the Square, a small stage where independent performances can take place, good quality graffiti, a bench that also works as a slide, more green/trees. | Coffee-shop user |
| 4 | Actor | Male | 27 | The participant chose to write on the panorama and make a small drawing as an addition. He wrote: I am very annoyed by the Church, which is in the middle of the Square, because everything that takes place in the Square is considered to be disrespectful to them (i.e. concerts etc.). I would like to see more green in the Square, more colour and no more coffee shops. The participant drew a tall structure that can be used as an observatory. | Coffee-shop user |

**Appendix 5**

**Selected documentation from the Scenographic Interventions**

**Appendix 6**

**The Toolkit for Scenographic Interventions and printing guidelines**

**Appendix 7**

**Sample of consent forms and risk assessment (interviews and workshops)**

**Appendix 8**

**List of publications and conference proceedings presented during this PhD project and produced through this investigation**

In this appendix you will find a list of publications, conference proceedings, as well as conference and symposia presentations that were produced and took place during this PhD project. Lastly, you will find a list of doctoral workshops and courses that I have attended outside the RCA.

**Publications and conference proceedings**

- Hadjilouca, M. 2020, 'The use of Scenographic Interventions for Social Engagement in Contested Public Spaces. The Case of the South Walled City of Nicosia'. Dramatic Architectures: Theatre and Arts in Motion. Conference Proceedings. Porto.

- Panayides, O., Hadjilouca, M. 2017. 'Branding collective actions: The analysis of Visual Semiotics used by active groups within the south walled city of Nicosia, Cyprus'. ICSVC Conference Proceedings

- Hadjilouca, M. 2015, 'Enhancing Active Co-existence in Contested Public Spaces, Through Co-creation and Social Engagement', Track 17, 11th European Academy of Design Conference Proceedings.

**Conference and symposia presentations**

- d + ID Symposium, University of Greenwich London (2019)

- Transformations: Arts, Cities, Mobility, Products, Services, Technology, RCA, (2019)

- 3rd ICSVC Conference Cyprus University of Technology, (2017)

- Porous Borders Symposium, PQ (2017)

- NORDES, 7th Nordic Design Research Conference (2017)

- 11th European Academy of Design Conference, Track 17, (2015)

**Doctoral workshops and summer schools**

- NORDES 7th Nordic Design Research Conference, Doctoral Consortium, 2017

- Theatre in Design, International Seminar and PhD Summer School, SDU Design Research, University of Southern Denmark, 2016