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NOW WE MAKE (IT) HERE: HOW CITY TRANSFORMATIONS IMPACT THE CREATIVE PROCESSES OF URBAN ARTISTIC PRACTICE

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How City Transformations Impact the Creative Processes of Urban Artistic Practice

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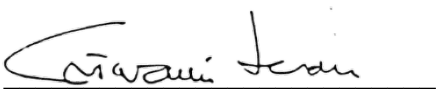
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Abstract

This research investigates the bidirectional relationship between art and the city, focusing on how the artist's experience of city transformations influences their artistic practices in urban public spaces. While existing literature extensively explores the impact and role of art and artists on cities, less attention has been given to how changes in the urban environment influence the creative processes of artists who engage with it. The central question is: how does artists' experience of urban change affect their artistic production and the ways they create works for urban public spaces? The interdisciplinary concept of *urban artistic practice* is introduced to frame urban art-works as a dynamic processes shaping and being shaped by the changing urban environment. The city of Bologna, Italy was selected as a case study, involving an in-depth analysis of twelve local artistic practices across the visual, installation-based and performative arts, with three of them – *Antonello Ghezzi*, *TIST*, and *Serendippo* – examined in detail, with a total of seven artworks analyzed. This qualitative research employed a methodological triangulation of semi-structured interviews and visual ethnography, conducted over fourteen months of fieldwork. Data analysis combined two analysis methods: Iterative Thematic Inquiry (ITI) and Systematic Visuo-textual Analysis (SVTA). At a macro level, the findings revealed three distinct modes of urban artistic practice in Bologna – *interactive objects*, *devices*, and *programs*. At a micro level, the creative processes of the art-works from the three local practices and their interactions with urban sites in Bologna were reconstructed through *visuo-textual thick descriptions*. This study offers new insights and useful methodological frameworks for understanding the evolving relationship between art, the city, and its transformations. It may also inform future comparative and longitudinal studies, and suggest applications for process-based, intangible urban artworks documentation, preservation, and development strategies, as well as art-based and cross-disciplinary education programs and curricula.

Questa ricerca indaga la relazione bidirezionale tra arte e città, concentrandosi su come l'esperienza degli artisti rispetto alle trasformazioni della città influenzi le loro pratiche artistiche negli spazi pubblici urbani. Sebbene la letteratura esistente esplori ampiamente l'impatto e il ruolo dell'arte e degli artisti nelle città, è stata prestata meno attenzione a come i cambiamenti nell'ambiente urbano plasmino i processi creativi degli artisti che con esso interagiscono tramite la propria arte. La domanda centrale è: come l'esperienza degli artisti del cambiamento urbano influenza la loro produzione artistica e i modi in cui creano opere per gli spazi pubblici urbani? Il concetto interdisciplinare di pratica artistica urbana *viene introdotto per inquadrare l'opera d'arte urbana (*art-work*) come processo dinamico che plasma ed è plasmato dall'ambiente urbano in cambiamento. La città di Bologna è stata scelta come caso di studio, coinvolgendo un'analisi approfondita di dodici pratiche artistiche locali nei campi delle arti visive, delle installazioni e delle arti performative. Di queste, tre –* Antonello Ghezzi*,* TIST *e* Serendippo *– sono state esaminate in dettaglio, con un totale di sette opere analizzate. Questa ricerca qualitativa ha impiegato una triangolazione metodologica di interviste semi-strutturate ed etnografia visuale, condotte in quattordici mesi di lavoro sul campo. L'analisi dei dati ha combinato due metodi: Iterative Thematic Inquiry (ITI) e Systematic Visuo-textual Analysis (SVTA). A livello macro, i risultati hanno rivelato tre modalità distinte di pratica artistica urbana a Bologna:* oggetti interattivi*,* dispositivi *e* programmi*. A livello micro, i processi creativi delle opere delle tre pratiche locali e le loro interazioni con i siti urbani di Bologna sono stati ricostruiti attraverso* dense descrizioni visuo-testuali*. Questo studio offre nuove prospettive di indagine e utili quadri metodologici per comprendere la relazione in costante evoluzione tra arte, città e le sue trasformazioni. Inoltre, fornisce indicazioni per futuri studi comparativi e longitudinali e suggerisce applicazioni per la documentazione, conservazione e sviluppo di opere urbane immateriali e process-based, come anche per programmi formativi interdisciplinari e art-based.*

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I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the individuals, the artists, who participated in this study. Engaging so closely with some '*Other'*s' daily work settings and creative practices is, at best, a rare and unusual experience. I can only imagine how intrusive it might feel, under ordinary circumstances, to have a complete stranger enter your life with countless questions, a notebook, and a camera. I thank you for sharing your time(s) and space(s) with me, and for offering your (practical) knowledge, skills, commitment, and creative and emotional energy to this research. I have learned so much from you. But more importantly, studies like this would not be possible without your generous presence, patience, and curiosity toward unconventional (or rather, tentative) academic research practices like this one.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the two reviewers for the time, attention, and effort they devoted to reading and revising my work. Your comments and suggestions have been invaluable in refining and enhancing the quality of this research.

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Vorrei esprimere la mia più profonda gratitudine alle persone, gli artisti, che hanno partecipato a questo studio. Entrare in contatto così intimo con i setting di lavoro quotidiani e le pratiche creative di qualcun 'Altro' *è un'esperienza quantomeno inusuale. Posso solo immaginare quanto possa essere percepito come intrusivo, in circostanze ordinarie, avere un completo estraneo che piomba nella tua vita con innumerevoli domande, un taccuino e una fotocamera al seguito. Vi ringrazio, quindi, per aver condiviso con me i vostri tempi e spazi, e aver offerto a questa ricerca il vostro sapere (e saper fare), il vostro impegno, e la vostra energia creativa ed emotiva. Ho imparato davvero tanto da voi. Ma a parte questo, e certamente più importante, questo tipo di studi non sarebbero possibili senza la vostra generosa presenza, pazienza e la curiosità dimostrata verso pratiche (o, per meglio dire, tentativi) di ricerca accademica inusuali come questa.*

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

"Change and recurrence are the sense of being alive – things gone by, death to come, and present awareness. The world around us, so much of it our own creation, shifts continually and often bewilders us. *We reach out to that world to preserve or to change it and so make visible our desire.*" (Lynch, 1972, p.1, emphasis added)

"[…] experiencing means living; and that living goes on in and because of an environing medium, not in a vacuum. […] Experience is primarily a process of *undergoing*: a process of standing something; of suffering and passion, of affection, in the literal sense of these words. […] Experience is no slipping along in a path fixed by inner consciousness. […] Since we live forward; since we live in a world where changes are going on whose issues means our weal or woe; since every act of ours modifies these changes and hence is fraught with promise, or charged with hostile energies – what should experience be but a future implicated in the present!" (Dewey, 1917, pp.7-9, emphasis added)

Thesis overview and roadmap

This research focuses on what we might define as the 'bidirectional' relationship between art and the city. With this qualitative, interdisciplinary inquiry, I have explored how the experience of a changing city influences the ways of 'doing' the art that is directed towards it.

What can be said about the interaction between art and the city? There are at least three perspectives that can be identified from the (at least) thirty-year-long scholarly debate on this matter. The first perspective concerns the spectacularization of the city (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015), a viewpoint tied to the culture-based regeneration of post-industrial cities globally (but particularly in Western countries), their designation as 'creative', and the recent 'branding' strategies adopted by many urban centers – all urban development phenomena that, albeit differently, share the involvement of art. The second perspective focuses on the complex and often controversial presence and identity of the monument in urban space as an artistic object of public memory, while the third perspective is offered by the emerging field of urban aesthetics, which highlights the perceptual and aesthetic relationship between the individual and the urban environment, going beyond the philosophical analysis of art itself to consider the subjective – and often artful – experience of the city. I will outline these perspectives in detail at the beginning of Chapter 2, *Review of literature and theoretical framework*, in Section 2.1, to provide my thesis with a broad contextual background.

Urban aesthetics help shift the focus to a central figure within this multitude of interactions between art and the city: the *artist*. Who, then, is this actor? With the growing popularity of the concept of *creativity*, especially in urban policies and economic development strategies, the role of the artist has undergone a degree of

instrumentalization, which has gradually rendered the artist's identity increasingly ambiguous and flexible. What seems to emerge is a multiplicity of definitions of the artist as an "actor of urban change" (Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek, 2017), based on both objective criteria and subjective processes of self-perception, which numerous studies across the humanities and the social sciences have helped to outline – such as by defining the figure of the "*public artist*" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015) or, more recently, of the "*critical urban artist*" (Kaddar et al., 2020). But what does this artist do in the city? How do they participate in its transformations? The literature highlights the many contributions – the '*doings*' – of the artist's work in the city: performance-based installations and installation-based performances, murals that walk the line between subversive action and beautification, independent art spaces and socially engaged interventions, as well as acts of political protest and commemoration. This heterogeneous *art-making* reflects what Nathalie Heinich (Heinich, 2014) called the *contemporary art paradigm*, and more specifically, the so-called "organizational turn" in contemporary artistic practice (Holm and Beyes, 2022), which thrives on an increasing hybridization between art forms – such as the visual and the performing arts, between disciplines and spatial practices – such as art and architecture, and a redefinition of artistic expressions like public art, alongside the emergence of new forms of critical interventions like artivism, which also target the re-signification of monuments and cultural heritage. What becomes most evident in all these experiences and experiments of art-making in the city is the shared intrinsically processual, interactive, conceptual, and situated nature of the work of art. In Chapter 2, Subsections 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5, and 2.1.6, I will explore these different forms of 'doing' art in the urban public space through a comprehensive thematic review of the literature.

Now, while the role and influence of art and artists on the dynamics of urban transformation is a well-addressed issue in the literature, to date there has been little focus on how the city and its transformation over time influence the artistic production directed toward it and, consequently, how this affects the artists and the ways in which they create their art. My research question starts precisely from this *reversal of perspective*, arguing that we should pay particular attention not only to how artists influence the city, but also to how the city itself influences the artists and their artistic practices.

The 'reversal' proposed here is supported by an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that I have synthesized under the expression *urban artistic practice*. With this term, the aim is to suggest a unified and integrated theoretical framework, composed of three fundamental concepts that characterize artistic production aimed at the city: urban space, the artwork, and artistic practice. I have interpreted these concepts through a *temporal* lens – recognizing that they change over time, an *experiential* lens – tied to the subjective experience of both the artist and the public, and a *social* lens – as both art and the city are social phenomena. The underlying premise is that the *'making and being made'* of the urban environment proceeds in tandem with the *'making and being made'* of human practices, which take place not just within the city but through it, and vice versa. This dynamic encapsulates a

certain "intrinsic logic" of a city (Löw, 2012), meaning its specific identity. In the context of my study, this conceptualization establishes a dual relationship in which the artists' practice impacts the city, and simultaneously, the city shapes the artists' creative practice. To understand how artists do what they do through the city, I have framed the artwork not as the mere product of an organized set of artistic activities, but as *a site-specific creative process* that emerges from the artist's particular situated and social practice (Zembylas, 2014; Schatzki, 2014; Becker et al., 2006), thus defining it as an urban *art-work*. This process is necessarily continuous with the artist's life, and is "sanctioned" by the artful production of "rules" (Irvin, 2022, 2005). It integrates within its "media profile" the urban sites where it takes place and its interactions with the public (Caldarola, 2020). I will introduce and discuss this theoretical framework in Section 2.3.

From an operational standpoint, I considered that these premises called for an in-depth exploration of the experience of this *doing* art, understood as a specific human activity *emerging through* and *oriented toward* a particular context. This exploration focused on the formation of creative products and processes, beginning with the direct experience of the artists. Therefore, the research is qualitative and empirical, and its design follows a case study approach, which I structured on two interconnected levels: a *macro*-case study, centered on the city of Bologna, Italy, and a *micro*-case study, involving a sample of twelve Bolognese urban artistic practices, consisting of seventeen artists and twenty-six art-works. However, the true empirical core of the investigation revolves around three of these urban artistic practices: the duo *Antonello Ghezzi*, the collective *This Is So Temporary*, and the association *Serendippo*. At the micro level, I examined the formation of their creative products and processes, that is, their art-works – seven in total, all stemming from their experience of Bologna's transformation. Practically speaking, I conducted fourteen months of fieldwork in Bologna, involving both these three practices and the broader sample of artists. I structured this work using a methodological triangulation (Flick, 2004) that combined *semi-structured interviews* with the wider artists' sample, and *visual ethnography* with the three selected practices. The visual ethnography included stimulated recall interviews (SRI), the collection of visual documents, and participant observation. All methods were aimed at probing the often tacit experience of the artists regarding Bologna and their artistic processes and products within a changing city. This resulted in hours of verbal descriptions detailing how the artists created their works in specific sites across Bologna, numerous images and videos of these works, sketches, prototypes from the artists' archives or from the field, as well as attempts at realization or actual events where the works were performed, and so forth. I will reflect on this specific research approach in Chapter 3, *The methodological approach*, and its various sections, outlining innovative methodological perspectives that, it is hoped, could have promising practical implications for future studies on art-making in the city.

In line with this approach, and given the nature of the data collected, I chose to structure the subsequent analysis by triangulating two markedly pragmatic,

pragmatist, iterative, interpretative, and descriptive analytical methods: *Iterative Thematic Inquiry* (ITI; Morgan and Nica, 2020) and *Systematic Visuo-textual Analysis* (SVTA; Brown and Collins, 2021). I will illustrate my *iterative visuo-textual approach* to data analysis in detail at the beginning of Chapter 4, *Data analysis and findings*, in Section 4.1. The fundamental requirement for this analytical framework was that these methods would allow me to integrate the visual and the textual data I had collected, thus enabling an in-depth and combined analysis of both the descriptions and images of the urban art-works. This is precisely what sets this study apart from previous researches examining the relationship between art and the city, thus moving beyond traditional analyses which have often consider these aspects – the visual and the textual – separately. Moreover, my aim was to keep the artist's practical experience central while continuously and critically reflecting on my own preconceptions about the phenomenon being observed. I began the data analysis with the ITI method, applied to the broader sample of artistic practices. The thematic results of this phase were subsequently integrated into the SVTA, which was conducted exclusively on the data collected from the three Bolognese practices. Through ITI, I identified two thematic domains and seven thematic summaries, focusing on recurring attitudes, characteristics, and operational modes emerging in relation to urban artistic practice in Bologna, the various art-works discussed, and, most importantly, the artists' experiences of the transformations of their city over time. I will provide an account of these thematic findings in Subsection 4.1.2.

Overall, the intention behind the entire analysis was to produce *thick visuo-textual descriptions* of the urban art-works in *and* as site-specific creative processes of the three Bolognese artistic practices, responding to the research question in a heterogeneous way, while systematically highlighting the wide variety of modes, conceptions, interactions, and influences between situated art-making and this specific city. The final step of analysis through SVTA consisted of two phases. First, I examined the transcriptions of the interviews with the artists concerning the unfolding of a particular urban art-work in one or more specific times and spaces, comparing this verbal material with images of the same art-work – both those created by the artist and those produced by me. This phase was followed by a schematic reconstruction through visual coding and redrawing of the art-work under examination. This reconstruction aimed to deliver complex *process diagrams* capable of mapping the formation of the key features of the urban art-work within the course of the artist's creative activities over time and their relationship with their site (or sites) in Bologna – always interpreted in light of the broader practice of that particular artist. At a macro level, three definitions emerged for each of the three Bolognese practices, corresponding to three 'ways of doing' urban artistic practice in that city: *Interactive objects*, *Devices*, and *Programs*. At a micro level, I articulated the reconstruction of the art-works through the process diagrams using what I have termed a *thematic legend.* Not only this legend supports the interpretation of the findings but is itself a result, as it explicates, categorizes, and systematizes the modes and logics of interaction and production emerging within

the seven urban art-works of the three artistic practices, closely tied to the temporal and spatial continuities and discontinuities of the urban sites involved and the city of Bologna as a whole. Each visuo-textual description of each individual art-work is composed of a visual component, the process diagram with schematics and images, and a textual component, in which I reconstructed the unfolding of those same processes through the words of the artists. I will present each of these reconstructions in Sections 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

With this thesis I contend that, through the results of such a systematic, descriptive, and multimodal approach, we can gain a deep understanding of the temporal, spatial, and praxeological *interdependence* between situated art-making, in its various forms, and the city – between the art-work and the urban site. This understanding highlights, for example: what space the artist has designated as, potentially, the space of the work; what the artist has determined the work to be – or what it can be, if only partially constituted – in its complete form. Furthermore, it considers what, in the work, constitutes its site in physical or immaterial terms, what types of interactions with the work are possible, when and in what forms, and what relationships these interactions maintain with the site. Finally, it explores what modes of production, or "instantiation" of the work, through a given site in the city, emerge, and how the work unfolds over time. I will provide a comprehensive discussion of these findings in Chapter 5, *Discussion and conclusion*, highlighting both their limitations and their potential contributions, especially in practical terms.

I believe that the type of analysis I have outlined with this research and its results, in addition to emphasizing the particular phenomenology of art-making in the city through a dynamic and transformative conception of the latter, offers interesting and novel perspectives in terms of its extensibility or generalizability. In the future, it may be beneficial to further studies that would adopt a comparative approach across different cities, including those located in non-Western contexts, or a longitudinal approach, tracking a specific urban artistic practice over time to deepen our understanding of how artists create art in response to urban changes. This knowledge can be useful not only for these interdisciplinary scholarly studies, but also for those working in the artistic and cultural fields, or for those who aspire to do so.

1.1 Disclaimers: Personal background, positioning, and disciplinary reflections

This research grew out of my personal background. I am an artist, designer, and architect, trained in architectural design and in the field of so-called *applied aesthetics,* which encompasses the design, construction, and understanding of the built environment, including the city. This background has inevitably shaped my conceptualization of art, my engagement with it, my appreciation for it, and my experience of it. Most significantly, it has influenced my approach to the act of artistic creation. There is no doubt that my preconceptions, both personal and

professional, have played a role in shaping my perspectives. My education was always practical first and then theoretical. What do I mean by that? In my view, any creative or design action related to urban space (irrespective of whether it is artistic or architectural) should prompt an essential reflection on the *practical act of creative making*, i.e., on 'doing creatively'. This is to say that the process of making itself should be the subject of reflection, with attention paid to the *practical implications* and the *relationship* and *interaction* with the *specific context* in which the creative action forms and is realized.

Such reflection has consistently entailed posing the following question: Why am I doing this – right here, right now? Why design – a building, a square, a fixture, an installation, a repainting project, a performance, or whatever – in this particular place, at this particular time? What, through this specific place, am I trying to express creatively? What is this particular place telling about itself? Who is it? Who has it been, and how has it been? What is it, and what can it become, that which I am doing here and now? What potential relationships, connections, bonds, or references are possible, and which are precluded? Which are feasible, and which are not? And from what specific design acts might these relationships emerge? Or, could it be that *a* design intention emerges or takes shape from preexisting relationships?

Only through this tacit investigative and reflective approach, coupled with a praxeological and situated attitude, could a certain conceptualization of the creative act itself emerge. In my view, the key issue here is that the meaning of a specific action or event cannot be predetermined in advance of the direct experience of that action or event.

My constant questioning of my practice as an artist and architect, both from an 'endogenous' perspective – considering *how* I do what I do – and an 'exogenous' one – regarding *where*, *when*, and *with whom* I work, as well as the specific context in which I operate, and the significant shifts and increasing hybridizations that characterize the profession for which I was trained – architecture (which I have always, relentlessly conceived of as 'doing art') – is the real reason that led me to the particular subject of this research. My intention, or rather my hope, was to understand more about 'the *how*' (in the plural) that drive these creative processes, which are so intrinsically connected to, and seemingly depending on, a certain context. However, to do so, it was necessary to look beyond my personal experience and turn to the multitude of ways of art-making, embodied in the myriad possible or already existing practices of someone '*Other*', in other contexts.

So, this is a *qualitative* and *empirical* exploration of a very specific form of contemporary art practice and artistic practical knowledge. More specifically, it is an exploration *of how artists do what they do*, particularly focusing on the methods and approaches they employ, in relation to their experience of the city they live and work in. It is my assertion that these 'doings' can be observed, listened to, and are thus reportable.

What, then, should the reader expect from this work? This dissertation is not, strictly speaking, a philosophical, historical, or sociological account. I will not

propose any general theorization, although some of my assertions and arguments may take the form of conceptualizations, and often quite abstract ones. I will not outline a genealogy or historical overview of art in urban public spaces, though I will frequently reference significant examples from art and urban design history to provide a more precise context for the empirical cases. Nor will I present a sociological study of art-making as a social practice in relation to social institutions or structures, although I will often recall a conception of creative intentions and actions of artists as social, whether they work in a non-intersubjective setting – such as in solitude behind closed studio doors – or in an intersubjective one, collaborating in a public square with two, five, ten, or fifty other people.

Throughout the dissertation, the reader will find that many of my questions and arguments connect or even coincide with fundamental issues in the humanities and the social sciences. In fact, the scope of my study relates to several key points in aesthetics, the theory and history of art and architecture, design, the sociology of art, and visual culture studies. But it also intersects with urban studies, cultural geography, the sociology of space, and organization studies. Indeed, these are some of the fields from which my study draws. These intersections and overlaps appear in multiple instances throughout the study, as artistic praxis and aesthetic experience – in this case, of specific transforming urban environments – are more or less explicit concerns of these disciplines. And yet, does it land in one specific field? The short answer is: no.

So, where do I place this research? In my view, it is less a question of 'fitting in', and more one of *alignment*. Indeed, I argue that my study aligns with those *interdisciplinary* scholarly programs across the humanities and social sciences that attempt to advance the understanding of the relationship between art and the city. Or, more specifically, between situated artistic practice – or art-making – and the manifold transformations impacting the contemporary urban landscape. These studies are primarily concerned with the design of the artwork, where the concept of 'artwork' includes both the installation in a square or a mural, and the architectural project. One could say that this study of mine concerns the *theory* of artistic practice. I agree, provided that by 'theory' we mean, for instance, a written piece by (or about) an artist reflecting on, describing, and conceptualizing their own methods and design approaches, developed over time through the creation of specific works of art.

I do not intend to engage here in a detailed examination of the concept of 'interdisciplinarity'. Such an analysis would probably require an entirely new dissertation and would probably add little to a field that has already been extensively explored. For the purposes of this introductory statement, it will suffice to understand that my position regarding interdisciplinarity is based on the idea of it as an opportunity *to move between and through* different disciplines and, in doing so, reformulate the ways in which those disciplines operate, to the point that the distinctions between them become imperceptible (e.g., post-disciplinarity). The goal of this movement between and across disciplines is to understand '*how*' to successfully pursue a particular '*inquiry*'.

This inter-disciplines movement, I believe, must be fundamentally iterative (involving thinking back and forth and through) and unavoidably pragmatic (where doing is thinking, and thinking happens through doing). Furthermore, the nature of this movement is a matter of *method* – not as in 'procedure', but rather in the sense of a combined and creative *use*, though necessarily reflective, critical, and rigorous (but above all, skeptical), of the various methodological approaches of the disciplines one is 'diagonally' traversing. As Julia Kristeva (1997, pp. 5-6, emphasis added) stated: "interdisciplinarity is always a site where expressions of resistance are latent. Many academics are locked within the specificity of their field: that is a fact [...] the first obstacle is often linked to individual competence, coupled with a tendency to jealously protect one's own domain. Specialists are often too protective of their own prerogatives, do not actually work with other colleagues, and therefore do not teach their students to construct a *diagonal* axis in their methodology".

In this investigation, the *subjective side of experience* is central. In fact, it is precisely what crosses and connects the various fields and disciplines from which I draw. I contend that, to truly explore, understand, and identify the experiences of individuals within a specific community – namely, artists who live and artfully work in a particular urban setting – we must closely examine the situated practices of that community. This, I believe, is fundamentally an empirical endeavor. Therefore, my inquiry primarily relies on empirical methodologies and techniques, such as ethnography, interviews, direct observation, document collection, and most importantly, personal immersion in the field.

This might seem like an obvious choice if made within the boundaries of a single discipline. For instance, sociology or anthropology have long used ethnography for their scientific purposes. However, in studies that operate in a broad interdisciplinary field, it is not easy to determine within which paradigm one should work. In this sense, I turned to *pragmatism* from the very beginning of my doctoral research. In this paradigm, I found a way to transcend disciplinary boundaries – the 'moving between and through' I mentioned earlier – while still respecting the specificities of those same disciplines. The question of method and methodology thus becomes crucial again. In fact, pragmatism – broadly understood as "the quality of dealing with a problem in a sensible way that suits the conditions that really exist, rather than following fixed theories, ideas, or rules" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024), and more specifically linked to the classical pragmatist philosophy of North American scholars such as William James and John Dewey – provides the researcher with the flexibility to make reference to a wide variety of epistemologies. It thus allows the use of methodologies that are adaptable to a specific research problem, especially one of a complex nature. However, this does not mean uncritically embracing the ubiquitous 'whatever works' motto, which is often (and mistakenly) associated with a pragmatic attitude (Morgan, 2014), nor it is merely a matter of problem-solving. Rather, such a choice involves simultaneously focusing on both the "*how to?*" and the "*why to?*" of conducting a certain research (Morgan, 2014, p. 1046), with the goal of understanding what the best choices are in pursuing a particular object of inquiry. The question that follows

is necessarily: "*what difference does it make?*" – "not only to acquire knowledge one way rather than another (i.e., the procedures we use), but to produce one kind of knowledge rather than another (i.e., the purposes we pursue)" (Morgan, 2014, p. 1048). My personal approach to research aligned with the pragmatist philosophy's emphasis, particularly in Dewey's, on the concepts of '*inquiry*' and '*experience*'. The focus on human practical experience and the continuous questioning – fundamentally *interpretive* and *context-dependent* – of that experience, through experience itself, necessarily brings the researcher face-to-face with their own "beliefs" and the "meaning of our actions", since "the origins of our beliefs arise from our prior actions and the outcomes of our actions are found in our beliefs. Experiences create meaning by bringing beliefs and actions in contact with each other" (Morgan, 2014, p. 1046). This self-conscious process, "by which beliefs that have become problematic are examined and resolved through action […] a process of making choices by asking and answering questions" (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047), described by Dewey through the concept of 'inquiry', seemed to offer fertile ground on which to base this research, especially given – as I understand it – the indistinguishability between life, 'doing' (in this case, art), and research.

1.2 Research questions

I developed the research questions and sub-questions in my study at both a general and specific level, with a particular focus on the case study of the city of Bologna, Italy. These are the main research questions:

1. How does the transformation of the city (*of Bologna*), as experienced by artists, impact their urban artistic practice?
    - How do artists make sense of the spatial, cultural, and socio-economic changes in Bologna, and how do these perceptions influence their artistic practicing?
    - Do artists adapt their artistic practicing and identity to the evolving urban environment of Bologna?
2. In what ways does the transformation of the city (*of Bologna*) influence the creative processes underlying the production of urban artworks?
    - In what ways do artists shape their creative processes in relation to changes in Bologna's architectural and urban environment, as well as in its cultural, social, political and economic landscape?
    - How do artists' reflections on Bologna's transformation influence their choice of mediums and methods employed in the production of their urban artworks? And how does is shape the stages of art creation, from conceptualization to execution?
    - How do artists' interpretations of these changes differ when they engage with different sites within Bologna?

3. What interdisciplinary methodologies can be developed and employed to explore the practices and processes of creating art in urban spaces, particularly in relation to the transformation of these spaces as experienced by the artists?
    - What are the potential limitations of existing qualitative methods in studying the impact of urban transformation on artistic practices and artists working in urban settings, and how can these be addressed?
    - What approaches, methods, or techniques could be developed to explore and analyze the interplay between visual and textual data in the study of artistic practicing in urban settings?

1.3 Research aims

1. To develop an understanding of how artists experience and interpret the spatial, cultural, and socio-economic transformations of the city (*of Bologna*) and how these experiences influence their urban artistic practices.

2. To examine in what ways the ongoing transformation of the city (*of Bologna*) influences the creative processes of local artists, particularly in the production of site-specific urban artworks.

3. To explore (the possibility of) interdisciplinary methodologies that effectively capture the complex relationship between urban transformation and artistic practices in the city.

1.4 Definition of terms in operational contexts

This section provides brief explanations of key terminology and acronyms used throughout this study.

Artist

In this research, an *artist* is the actor who creates art; specifically, art directed at urban public spaces. This artist lives and work in a particular context, i.e., a specific city. The work of the artist is organized in a practice. Through this practice, articulated through creative processes, the artist produces their artworks; specifically, artworks directed as urban public spaces. The artist's daily experiences of and interactions with their city's transformations over time are integral to their creative processes. My understanding of the artist places its identity, experiences, and creations at the center of the study, emphasizing their role in both influencing and being influenced by the urban environment through their artistic production. In this research, the term *artist* is used broadly to also include curators and representatives of cultural associations. This is because artists often serve multiple

and overlapping roles – they may be curators, and curators may be artists, as well as both can also be representatives of cultural associations.

In this manuscript, I will use the pronoun '*they*' when referring to the artist in the singular.

Art-work/Urban art-work

In this research, the term *art-work*, particularly referred to as the *urban art-work* when produced for urban public spaces, is used to describe *the creative product* and *process* resulting from the artist's practice within a specific city. An art-work, or urban art-work, refers to an artistic expression belonging mainly (yet not exclusively) to both the *contemporary visual arts* that is heavily conceptual, installation-based, site-specific, interactive, performative, and public. My understanding of the art-work is that of an *artistic work*, in a praxeological sense. This understanding goes beyond the idea of the artwork as merely constituted by a physical art object. Rather, it is conceived of as a creative and experiential process that is continuous with the daily life of the artist and the public(s), within a particular urban environment.

In this manuscript, I will use the terms 'art-work' and 'urban art-work' when specifically talking about the creative products and processes of urban artistic practice, while I will use the term 'artwork' to broadly refer to an artifact, an art product, or art object existing within the paradigm of contemporary art in a more conventional way.

City

In accordance with the definition provided by Bell and Shalit (2021), a *city* is defined here as a densely populated area and continuous settlement district, organized under a unified jurisdiction. (UN Habitat, 2009, as cited in Bell and Shalit, 2021, p.9) It encompasses both formal and informal relationships, civic elements, and interests, reflecting the expressions of its residents and those employed within the city. The term city in this context also encompasses metropolitan cities, denoting major urban centers that hold political, economic, and cultural significance, acting as hubs for larger populations than the city's residents alone. Typically, metropolitan cities feature a densely populated urban core and a less-populated surrounding area, including suburbs or small towns. While these peripheral areas may have political independence, they often rely on the metropolitan city for crucial services such as hospitals, colleges, markets, ports, or airports (Bell and Shalit, 2021, p.9). In my study, the notion of '*city'* is also understood as a dynamic social and cultural environment in constant evolution. The city is shaped by, and simultaneously shapes, the human practices that occur within it, concerning both material bodies and objects, as well as immaterial daily events, activities, and actions that unfold over time and are continuously spatialized. This view sees cities as manifesting their specific characteristics and identities yielding what I will oftentimes refer to as the city's "intrinsic logic" (Löw, 2012). A city also operates as a social phenomenon where human "doings and sayings" and "material

arrangements" (Schatzki, 2014) – bodies, artifacts, organisms, and things linked by relations like contiguity and causality – are interconnected in inseparable "bundles" and mutually influence one another (Schatzki, 2014).

Creative process

The term *creative process* is used here to specifically refer to the *constitution* of artistic products and processes – specifically, *urban art-works* – articulated through the *artistic practice* of the artist. As such, this notion is inseparable from both the artistic practice and the art-work itself. It is a practical, creative, intentional, and experiential process that is understood in continuity with the everyday life of the artist and those who interact with their art, reflecting an ongoing interplay between creation and experience within the dynamic context of the city.

CP, or CPs

"Creative process", or "creative processes".

Culture

Culture denotes "the beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behavior patterns of a specific group of people." (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.27) Describing something as *cultural* implies, at the very least, that "it is shared by a significant number of members of a social group; shared in the sense of being behaviorally enacted, physically possessed, or internally thought. Further, this something must be recognized in some special way and at least some others are expected to know about it; that is, it must be intersubjectively shared. Finally, for something to be cultural it must have the potential of being passed on to new group members, to exist with some permanency through time and across space" (D'Andrade, 1992, p.230).

Instantiation

Generally speaking, the term *instantiation* is used here to mean a *realization* or a *version of* something. More specifically, here I refer to an ontology originating in analytic philosophy through which we can understand artworks (and art-works) as an abstract class of entities, or *types*, constituted (i.e., instantiated) in one or multiple concrete *token* instances (for a discussion of the type-token distinction, see Peirce [1906] 1933). I draw this term and its understanding from the theories on contemporary art by Caldarola (2020).

Practice/Artistic practice

The term *practice* is used here to refer to human activities organized as necessarily social and situated phenomena, or "configurations of cohesive activities that establish coordinated and collaborative relationships among the members of a community" (Zembylas, 2014, p.1). Specifically, the *artistic practice* is understood as the 'making of' the artwork – a *creative process* rooted in being a social practice. An artistic practice involves not only the artist's organized creative intentions and

'doings' taking place within their everyday life, but also the public(s) and the material and immaterial contexts in which the artwork is created and experienced. These elements are viewed as necessarily interconnected, existing in a relationship of continuity with one another.

Sanction/Artist's sanction

The terms *sanction* or *artist's sanction* is used here with reference to the theories by Irvin (2022, 2005). These terms pertain to the *modes* by which the *properties and features* of contemporary artworks (and specifically, of art-works) are established and recognized through the intentional creative activity of the artists. This activity sits within their artistic practice. It includes the artist's *definition* – or, in Irvin's terms, "sanctions" – of particular *rules* for the artwork, which may prescribe or proscribe specific modes of production (i.e., of instantiation), of interaction, or of preservation of the contemporary artwork. These rules, produced and existing in the form of verbal, written, or visual statements by the artist, are understood as an integral and procedural part of the artwork itself, that is, of its *medial profile*.

Site

The term *site* is used here to refer to the specific material and immaterial context where the art-work is created and experienced. In the case of *site-specific* art, an expression in contemporary art which characterizes urban art-works, the site is understood as integral to the art-work's meaning and existence, emphasizing the connection between the artistic products and processes and their environments (see Caldarola, 2020; Kwon, 2002) In this research, I use the notion of site with regards to the *urban site* (or sites) of a particular city; my understanding of this notion is broad, as urban sites can be both physical-geographically and architecturally constituted (a location, a street, a wall, a building, etc.) and immaterial-socially constructed (i.e., historical, cultural, social – an event, a group of people, a memory, etc.).

Situated

I use the term *situated* to describe and refer to phenomena that are embedded within specific spatial, temporal, cultural, social and historical contexts. For the purpose of this research, artistic practices and their products – i.e., artworks, or art-works – are considered situated because *they occur within* and *are influenced by* their particular urban environments, reflecting the dynamic interactions between the artist, the artistic product and process, and the city.

Space

The term *space* refers to the physical, social, and cultural environment where practices unfold over time and are continuously spatialized. It is both understood as a materially constructed space and a socially produced context that is integral to understanding human practices and their interactions. My

understanding of the notion of space draws from the sociology of space by Löw, (2016), according to which "space is a relational arrangement of social goods [material goods, such as buildings] and people (living beings) at places [i.e, positions, sites that can be geographically marked]" (Löw, 2016, p.188).

UAP, or UAPs

"Urban artistic practice", or "urban artistic practices".

Urban change/Urban transformation

In this research, the terms *urban change,* or *urban transformation* (and sometimes, *city change*, or *city transformation*) are used interchangeably and understood as inseparable with that of *city* as a dynamic entity. In this context, the two terms are used to specifically highlight *certain processes or instances of change* taking place (or that took place) within the city over time, and because of *certain human practices*, yielding the city's specific characteristics and identity – its "intrinsic logic" (Löw, 2012). The concept encompasses both material and immaterial changes. In the context of my research, urban transformations, i.e., city change – influence and are influenced by artistic practices directed at urban spaces. Therefore, although I will oftentimes use the terms 'urban change', 'urban transformation', what I am ultimately talking about is the 'city' itself. Besides, in this study I do not provide or rely on a set definition of urban change, as the concept is rather understood through the individual experiences of, i.e., the meaning constructed by, the artists interviewed, who define what 'change' and/or 'transformation' of their city mean to them.

Chapter 2 – Review of literature and theoretical framework

"Environments change. A sudden disaster may destroy a city, farms will be made from wilderness, a loved place is abandoned, or a new settlement is built on an obscure frontier. Slower natural processes may transform an ancient landscape, or social shifts cause bizarre dislocations. In the midst of these events, *people remember the past and imagine the future*." (Lynch, 1972, p.3, emphasis added)

"*Art is a mode of prediction* not found in charts and statistics, and it insinuates possibilities of human relations not to be found in rule and precept, admonition, and administration." (Dewey, 1935, p.349, emphasis added)

Introduction and chapter outline

In this chapter, I present a thematic review of the literature on the relationship between contemporary artistic production in urban public spaces, artists, and city transformations. By exploring the interaction between art and the city at the macro-, meso-, and micro-level, I assess the current state of research on this topic and outline recent developments that have shaped the research problem. Finally, I introduce the theoretical framework of reference. The chapter is structured into three main sections.

My thematic review of the literature integrates studies from philosophical, historical, sociological, and artistic disciplines, as well as interdisciplinary fields such as urban aesthetics, urban studies, cultural geography, the sociology of space, and organization studies. In Section 2.1 and its subsections, I examine the multiple interactions between art and the city, addressing themes such as the spectacularization of the city, the monument, and the new perspectives offered by the field of urban aesthetics. I then focus on both the identities and the 'doings' of the artist in the context of urban transformation, analyzing the various forms and experiments of contemporary artistic practice in the city through different interpretative frameworks: the increasing hybridization between disciplines and practices – such as between art and architecture; the issue of the (urban) site; the redefinition of artistic expressions such as public art; and the emergence of new forms of critical interventions like artivism, which also target the re-signification of monuments and cultural heritage.

Building on this analysis, in Section 2.2, I present the research problem, proposing a 'reversal' of the usual perspective found in the literature, examining how the transformation of the city influences the artistic production directed towards it, rather than focusing on how art contributes to urban change.

From this reversal, the research questions formed. To support this particular line of inquiry, in Section 2.3 and its subsections, I introduce an interdisciplinary

theoretical framework centered on the concept of '*urban artistic practice*'. Drawing on theories from aesthetic philosophy (Caldarola, 2020; Irvin, 2022, 2013, 2005), urban sociology (Löw, 2012), and practice theory (Zembylas, 2014a, 2014b; Schatzki, 2014; Becker et al., 2006), I consider both the city and art-making as interconnected social phenomena that manifest through material and immaterial practices.

Through this thematic review of the literature, and the formulation of the interdisciplinary theoretical framework, in this chapter I lay the foundation for investigating a specific direction in the reciprocal relationship between urban transformation and artistic production, placing the artist's experience and creative process at the center of the inquiry.

2.1 Thematic review of literature: Artists and artistic practicing in city's transformations

In analyzing the literature concerning the relationship between contemporary artistic production intended for urban public spaces, its main actors – the artists – and the transformation of the city, I focused on a thematic exploration that moved across macro-, meso-, and micro-levels.

I began by exploring the general relationship between art and the city. I then focused on the artist and the multiple artistic practices that develop within the dynamics of urban transformation and city development. This thematic approach allowed me to: evaluate the current state of the field; to outline recent advancements in relevant literature; and ultimately, to define the research problem, which I present in Section 2.2. This exploration and the resulting research problem also led to the formulation of an interdisciplinary theoretical framework aligned with the central research question, detailed in Section 2.3. The literature review integrates recent studies across various disciplines, including historical, philosophical, sociological, and artistic fields, as well as theoretical and critical perspectives. It also incorporates insights from interdisciplinary areas such as urban aesthetics, human geography, cultural studies, and visual cultures.

In Subsection 2.1.1, *Art, artists, and the city,* I focus on the manifold intersections and interactions between art and the city. This section is organized around two main thematic lines emerging from the literature: (1) the spectacularization of the city; and (2) the monument. Additionally, I offer a brief overview of the emerging field of *urban aesthetics* to further frame the focus on artists and their practices within urban public spaces.

From Subsection 2.1.2 to Subsection 2.1.6, I focus on two key thematic subjects: the artist, and their artistic practice. Both are explored in relation to urban transformation. Through a review of recent literature, I first (1) present the manyfold definitions of the artist working in urban public spaces, outlining the rationale behind their practice and identifying recent interdisciplinary studies that characterize the 'professional' identity of such artist. I then (2) analyze what this

artist does, exploring the various forms of contemporary artistic practice aimed at urban public spaces. To this end, I propose three interpretative frameworks drawn from the literature. After briefly outlining recent "paradigm" shifts in contemporary art practice (Heinich, 2014) and examining them through the lens of "art's organizational turn" (Holm and Beyes, 2022), I analyze the interactions between art and architecture – specifically the hybridization between artistic and architectural theory and practice – and the concept of the (urban) site, particularly with respect to site-specific art. Finally, the discussion turns to public art and socially engaged artistic practices, concluding with an in-depth exploration of the intersections between art and activism, as well as art and memory in urban space.

2.1.1 Art, artists, and the city

The interaction between art and the city, particularly the role that artists play in the processes of urban construction and transformation, is a topic extensively explored in numerous studies. Recent contributions largely emerge from the fields of sociology and cultural geography. As geographers Thomas Boren and Craig Young argue, "the arts, culture, and 'creativity' have in recent years become central to urban policy. Arts and culture have been significant in coping with the post-industrial context and have played a key role in city marketing and urban regeneration" (Boren and Young, 2017, p.300). Over time, various interpretations of the interaction between art and the city have been developed, and more are certainly possible. For the purposes of providing an introductory framework for my study and research problem, I will now focus on a brief discussion of two main perspectives derived from the literature through which we can observe this interaction and interpret contemporary forms of artistic production aimed at urban public space: (1) the process of *city spectacularization*, and (2) the *monument* as the primary expression of the encounter between art and urban space.

The spectacularization of the city

As argued by sociologist Silvia Mazzucotelli Salice (2015), the relationship between art and the city has deep and complex roots. Art has always played a central role in defining urban identity, not only through the beautification of public spaces but also by representing social, religious, and political values (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 27). Mazzucotelli Salice identifies three main "logic" or historical interpretations underlying the interaction between art and the city, highlighting how this interaction relates to the dynamics of urban space transformation.

The first logic proposed by the sociologist relates to the pre-19th-century "celebration of the civitas." This logic, described as "holistic" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 28), focuses on the conception of the city as a 'work of art', finding in the disciplines and practices of architecture and urban planning an artistic nature that, through the construction of the *urbs* – the material dimension of the city and its elements, particularly the square – aims to celebrate the so-called *civitas*, or civic community. This *civitas* is "the moral collective of the inhabitants: the *civitas* as a

'holistic subject' expresses its self-awareness to its citizens, who see their collective identity symbolically represented in it, in a close comparison with other cities" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 30).[1]

The second logic identified by Mazzucotelli Salice is that of the "*embellissement*." This logic is specifically linked to the aesthetic transformation of urban space. With modernity, the symbolic value of the square diminishes, and there is a growing preference for the space of the street, driven by the new elites' need to move quickly through the city and to see their power represented in the street. In this context, Mazzucotelli Salice notes, "the alliance between art and architecture, and therefore art and the city, enters into crisis" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 30). The production of urban space becomes increasingly standardized through the industrialization and engineering of architectural and urban disciplines, while art gradually secures an autonomous position relative to them. The tradition of the art of the *civitas* declines and is supplanted by *embellissement*, the 'beautification' or decoration of urban space through artistic artifacts; a term that refers to "all approaches to city design that make the aestheticization of urban spaces, particularly public ones, their ultimate goal [...] the work of art is essentially included [or merely inserted] into the urban space only after its design and construction have been completed" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 31).

Finally, the third logic goes beyond both celebration or mere embellishment, understanding the relationship between art and the city as a process of "collective space production" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 31). This relationship, initiated by the historical avant-gardes and particularly from the 1950s onwards, focuses on the active production of public space as a shared place of socialization and interaction. Art is seen here not just a means to represent or decorate urban space; it returns to being a tool for creating the relational and collective space of the city, while "artistic practices and design languages intertwines once again" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 35). Mazzucotelli Salice emphasizes that art and urban spectacle, in this context, "are called upon to facilitate the exploration and understanding of new urban contexts, such as industrial areas, suburban neighborhoods, infrastructure spaces, and leisure places" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.33). According to this logic, there is an "attempt by art to broaden its horizons and reflect on the perception of place by the spectator-actor. In particular, the artist is asked to rebuild the bond between citizen and place, so that the sense of belonging to places becomes a shared value once again, even in the contemporary city" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.34).

However, it is especially from the 1980s onward, with the end of the industrial era and the advent of globalization, that the relationship between art and the city undergoes a radical transformation (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 15). In this historical context, a gradual but profound restructuring of cities occurs in European, British, North American, and Australian contexts, particularly in medium and large cities, influenced by phenomena such as deindustrialization, migration,

[1] All quotes from Mazzucotelli Salice (2015) and Mazzucotelli Salice (2020), originally in Italian, have been translated by me.

and technological advancement – processes often associated with postmodernity (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 15). The transformations affecting cities are not only economic but also demographic, spatial – that is, urbanistic and architectural – as well as cultural. Deindustrialization led to the abandonment of vast urban spaces previously dedicated to productive activities, creating 'voids' that were gradually occupied by new economies based on the provision of immaterial goods and services, such as communication, advertising, and tourism. This new phase saw the rise of the so called *creative elites* (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 25), often employed in sectors related to technology and communication, who redefined urban demand and supply. According to sociologist Diane Crane (1992), the city has transformed from a place of material production to a place of cultural production, marking the shift toward a post-industrial economy in which culture becomes central (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 17): productive activities shift from the material to the immaterial, with increasing investments in sectors that offer "ambivalent" goods, that is, those with both symbolic and tangible components, such as tourism and entertainment (Zukin, 1995, in Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 17). The city, therefore, is no longer just a place of production but also of cultural consumption.

As Valeria Morea and Francesca Sabatini observe, "after the 20th century, the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial economy has also shifted the interest of urban planners and policymakers towards other drivers of urban growth. The new dominant urban concepts, underlying cross-cutting strategies, are the global city, the sustainable city, the resilient city, the creative city, and the smart city (Hatuka et al., 2018). Creativity and culture, thus, stand among the main drivers of the urban economy and have, consequently, made the creative economy the new major pivot of urban policies" (Morea and Sabatini, 2023, p. 1). In this scenario, competition among cities to establish themselves as key nodes within the global economic and financial network (the so-called "global cities" or "world cities," Sassen, 1991; Hall, 1966) has driven many urban areas to adopt an "entrepreneurial logic" aimed at maintaining a competitive advantage: "for the first time, many cities around the world share a global culture, which has critically transformed their histories, their adaptive schemes, and their future developments, while also dramatically reshaping their self-representational strategies" (Chinellato and Haklai, 2022, p. 133).

This dynamic has indeed led cities to develop and adopt urban development strategies centered on the "spectacularization" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 17) of both specific urban spaces (the so-called "creative districts," cf. Lavanga, 2013) and their own identity, generating a strong cultural drive focused on image and paving the way for the phenomenon known as "culture-led urban regeneration" (Garcia, 2004, in Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 17). In this context, "the spectacularization of certain high-value urban fragments is a fundamental element of these measures. Faced with the unpredictability of economic systems, urban centers have realized that to compete within a densely populated and highly competitive market – or, in other words, to attract resources – it is necessary to bring to the forefront the idea of 'a new sparkling city eager to please [rising] inside and in place of the modern-

industrial one dominated by the factory and its pervasive rationality' (Amendola, 2003, p. 99)" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 17). In this regard, the theories of American scholar Richard Florida, particularly the well-known (and widely debated and criticized, cf. Peck, 2005; Markusen, 2006) theory of the "creative class" (Florida, 2002, 2012), have had a significant impact on how cities interpret their transformations with a view toward development and progress. The concept of the "creative class" has prompted many cities to develop urban marketing policies that mobilize art – such as "city branding" (Dinnie, 2010) or "place branding" (Kemp et al., 2012) – to promote themselves as "creative cities" (Landry, 2008) on the global stage.

In this context, the role of the artist becomes central. In an influential 2017 study, geographers Monika Murzyn-Kupisz and Jarosław Działek explore the role of artists in the context of urban transformations, emphasizing how artists, alongside other social, economic, and political actors, can influence processes of change within cities. The scholars analyze how artists are not only creators of cultural content but also strategic "actors of urban change" (Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek, 2017) who, through their presence and activities, impact the dynamics and development of cities. In their conceptualization of "urban actor", they include a wide range of individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions participating in the transformation of the city. These actors can be formal or informal, local or external, and their influence can be perceived as positive, controversial, or ambivalent. More specifically, some of these actors, such as local authorities or urban planners, are officially tasked with guiding urban development, while others, like artists, play a more informal but no less significant role. Drawing from a broad body of literature in urban studies (Heilbrun and Gray, 2001; Lloyd, 2004; Markusen, 2006; Montgomery, 2008; Woldoff et al., 2011; Schich et al., 2014; Florida, 2002, 2012; Zebracki and Smulders, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2004), Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek further highlight that artists represent a professional group particularly drawn to urban environments, especially large centers that offer better cultural infrastructure and a developed art market. Thus, the figure of the artist operating within the urban environment emerges not only as a cultural producer but also as a consumer of urban services, influencing the city's economy through tourism, creative industries, and other related economic activities. The scholars point out that the contribution of artists can extend far beyond direct cultural production. As previously discussed, they can generate an urban imaginary rich with a specific "cultural atmosphere" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 19) that can attract tourists, residents, and investors to a particular city, contributing to its regeneration.

On one hand, cities become places where artists can find inspiration and practice both mainstream and avant-garde artistic activities (Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek, 2017, p. 2), such as those art forms that 'move out' of gallery and museum spaces, preferring the public sites of the city. However, on the other hand, one of the key aspects discussed by the scholars is the ambivalence of the artists' role in urban change processes. While artists are often seen as figures who promote

creativity, social cohesion, and inclusion, much literature also highlights the risk that they may be instrumentalized by other urban actors, such as real estate developers or public authorities. Moreover, "art and artists have a long tradition in designing public spaces and environments, but have often come in at the end of the process to add ornamentation to a place, a statue or sculpture or something else that is an add-on to an environment that is already thought through and in many cases has already been built" (Boren and Young, 2017, p. 304). Artists, often pioneers in inhabiting declining neighborhoods (Zukin, 1989, 1995), attracted by low-cost spaces and the potential to transform these spaces into creative places, may trigger, for example, both urban regeneration and gentrification processes (Ley, 2003; Lavanga, 2013). These processes, while facilitating the reconfiguration of the image of a certain area of the city, may simultaneously contribute to phenomena such as rising property prices and the consequent displacement of lower-income residents. This ambivalence is underscored by the concept of "actors of urban change". In other words, artists can act as "strategic brokers" (Larner and Butler, 2007, p. 78), building collaborative relationships between government, local institutions, and community organizations, yet at the same time, they can be part of an urban development process that, if not properly managed, can lead to marked conflicts and social tensions (Zukin, 1989, 1995; Cameron & Coaffee, 2005; Ley, 2003). This phenomenon is well demonstrated by the case (one among countless others) of the *Redlight Project* in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, as thoroughly discussed by cultural economist Mariangela Lavanga. In 2009, the Municipality of Amsterdam launched a series of projects – *Redlight Fashion, Redlight Design*, and *RED A.i.R.* (*Redlight Art*) – in which artists from various disciplines, such as fashion designers, jewelers, and visual artists, were invited to temporarily use the vacant spaces of the former brothels located in the famous Red Light District – at that time known for prostitution, drug trafficking, and crime – as studios, galleries, and shops. The artists occupied these spaces for a limited time, contributing to the area's revitalization through their presence and creative activities. However, as Lavanga argued, this regeneration had two sides: "Fashion designers and jewelry designers basically used the spaces as both studio and shop to both create and sell their products. They were 'used' by the municipality but they also benefited from it. They had the opportunity to work and sell their products in a free studio/shop in the center of Amsterdam, in the most famous part of the Red Light District, enjoying the chance to get known nationally and internationally (e.g., during the Amsterdam International Fashion Week). Visual artists instead used the spaces only as their studio. Furthermore, being located not in the so-touristic Red Light District but in a more residential area in the center, they were less visible and probably less part of the gentrification process. However, by questioning their role within the strategies of the local government, they were able to genuinely contribute to the regeneration process while keeping their autonomous position. In all the cases, however, the artists had to leave the studios and no other places were provided. They have been clearly 'used,' however they have also benefited from the initiative in different ways" (Lavanga, 2013, p. 13).

The perspective concerning city spectacularization, as I have outlined thus far, reflects the evolving relationship between art and the city. From the celebration of the *civitas* to the modern emphasis on cultural consumption and branding, art's role in shaping the urban environment has undergone profound transformations. Now, central to this evolution is the question of how art, in its various forms, negotiates public memory, power, and space. Indeed, as cities increasingly employ creative and cultural strategies to redefine their identities, the presence of *monuments* (cf., Mazzucotelli Salice, 2020; Houlton, 2022) within these urban landscapes invites deeper reflection. While the concept of spectacularization emphasizes the dynamic, fluid interplay between art and urban change, the monument represents a more static, yet equally complex, counterpart. Unlike the ephemeral allure of contemporary cultural spectacles, monuments often embody a fixed, enduring presence, becoming focal points for collective memory and identity. Yet, they too are subject to reinterpretation and contestation, revealing the tensions between permanence and the ever-changing dynamics of urban life. In this sense, monuments not only complement the broader theme of urban spectacularization but also challenge us to reconsider the role of art in constructing, preserving, and reformulating shared histories within the public domain.

I will now turn the discussion to the monument as a specific artistic and cultural object and phenomenon, briefly exploring its dual nature as both a reflection of historical narratives and a site of ongoing negotiation between past and present, power and resistance, memory and identity.

The monument

According to Mazzucotelli Salice, "the alliance between art and the city, throughout past centuries, has found its fullest expression in the monument: from the erection of great medieval cathedrals to the monumental patriotic works of the late 19th century, art has found sustenance in the city and its citizens, just as society and urban space have identified in the monument the vehicle for transmitting political, economic, and social values" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2020, p.1). Furthermore, "the monument celebrates, through a stable artistic-architectural work, the memory of people, events, or regimes, and by establishing itself as a tangible sign within the territory, it aims to emphasize certain moments in the history of a populace, contributing to the creation of a strong and targeted cultural identity" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2020, p.1).

In the opening of his extensive theoretical examination of artistic-monumental production from prehistory to the present, *Monuments as Cultural and Critical Objects* (2022), Thomas Houlton describes the monument as "large-scale physical objects, usually (though by no means always) made of stone. They have been part of human culture since at least Neolithic times. The position that they occupy, at once private and public, temporal and lasting, seems designed to ensure, as Clive Seal has termed it, 'a social presence outlasting the body'. It is a social presence ensured through an architectural longevity that goes beyond smaller, more moveable objects (implements, clothes, weapons, and so on), marking how humans

have chosen to shape and organize the spaces in which they live and die" (Houlton, 2022, p.15), namely, cities. Houlton draws a connection between the role of monuments in modern and past societies, highlighting how they have always been fundamental tools both for constructing a shared heritage and for keeping alive the historical memory of specific nations, societies, communities, or groups of individuals. However, in his critical analysis, Houlton problematizes this interpretation, emphasizing how these "public objects" should not be considered as neutral. On the contrary, precisely because of their 'mnemonic investment', they are heavily laden with political and ideological significance, being deeply tied to the powers that erected them and to the narratives that their builders choose to emphasize, celebrate, or commemorate or, conversely, to exclude, marginalize, or forget. These narratives often go unnoticed in everyday life but can resurface as problematic or traumatic in specific spatial-temporal contexts or for specific communities: "monuments are public objects under huge amounts of pressure. How much of this complexity do we notice, when walking past them?" (Houlton, 2022, p.16). Drawing from the writings of Ann Kaplan, Houlton questions the concept of the monument as an object of the past that is far from inert and constantly acts in our present, as well as inquiries about our expectations regarding its role within the spaces of our daily lives in cities. He highlights how the relationship between us and the monument is dual, complex, mutable, and "almost anxiety-inducing. Is the purpose of a monument to educate, to mourn, to form a political or historical narrative? Should it be under the same pressure as the museum or archive to tell a clear, educational, or pedagogical narrative? Should a monument be erected by the community, in a gesture of extreme pain, or be planned over a course of years by governmental committees? Should it be erected by private corporations, or wealthy donors with an agenda to push, or paid for by public subscription? Is it for people living now, the ones who went before, or the ones who come after? These are questions that overlap, muddle against the monument with unruliness. Alongside them is another consideration: what (if anything) are our monuments asking of us? What are these structures willing us to do? How are they being used as tools of power? Do they create a power all of their own? Are they demanding us to behave in certain (ritualized) ways; imposing a culture or belief system that is totally alien to our own; telling us—however subliminally—that we are excluded, or punished, or at risk of violence and death, from the narratives or beliefs they express?" (Houlton, 2022, p.17). One of the key examples Houlton uses to illustrate the complexity and tensions inherent in monumentality – whether of historical creation or more recent production – is the *Karl Marx Monument*, erected in 1956 and located in Highgate Cemetery, London. Houlton argues that this monument is an emblematic example of the overlap between personal and public memory, as it not only serves as the tomb for Marx and his family, but also as a powerful political statement (Houlton, 2022, p.17). This dual identity of the monument as both an individual and collective, past and present, affective and political object makes it vulnerable to the ideological tensions that accumulate not only around whom the monument represents, namely Marx and/or his family, but also the meanings with

which it has been – implicitly or explicitly – invested, specifically Marx's philosophical thought. As evidence of this, the Marx monument has been the target of repeated acts of vandalism, the most recent of which occurred in February 2019 when it was damaged with a hammer and covered in red paint accompanied by hostile graffiti such as "doctrine of hate" and "architect of genocide" (Houlton, 2022, p.17).

The dynamic that emerges from this example demonstrates how "what is defined as memorable or historically significant is subject to social control, negotiation, and contestation" (Alderman and Dwyer, 2009 in Mazzucotelli Salice, 2020, p.2), and how the monument transcends temporal boundaries, changing its meaning depending on the historical and cultural context in which it not only exists but is interpreted.[2] Despite Marx having been dead for over a century, the monument that celebrates him continues to embody current political and social tensions.

Geographers Derek H. Alderman, Jordan P. Brasher, and Owen J. Dwyer (2020) further develop the discussion by examining the role, significance, and sociopolitical dynamics of memorials and monuments in urban contexts. According to the authors, these commemorative artistic objects and spaces symbolize, respectively, 'triumph' and 'loss' and, most importantly, are not mere representations of the past but reflect and legitimize selective historical perspectives within contemporary social order. The scholars argue that not everything from the past is commemorated. Indeed, the decision over what is considered "worthy" of memory – and thus of being monumentalized and commemorated – is necessarily mediated by power dynamics and social control. In this sense, such artistic objects simultaneously remember and forget, mirroring dominant values and perspectives (Alderman, Brasher & Dwyer, 2020, p.40). The scholars' analysis draws on four main metaphors through which commemorative art objects can be interpreted in urban spaces: the text, the arena, the performance, and the wound (dressing).

The *text* metaphor conceptualizes monuments and memorials as written texts in space, selectively narrating and omitting historical narratives to reflect power dynamics and social inequalities. A notable example of this "symbolic annihilation" – "the manner in which memorials and monuments fail to represent (or misrepresent) the identities and histories of marginalized social groups" (Alderman, Brasher & Dwyer, 2020, p.39) – is found in the Prince Henry Gardens in Adelaide, South Australia. There, monuments exclusively celebrate European male figures, neglecting Indigenous and female histories. However, the scholars note, as memorials are not static, they can be "rewritten" through the phenomenon of "symbolic accretion", where new meanings are layered over the original ones (Alderman, Brasher & Dwyer, 2020, p.41). One significant case is the Liberty

[2] In this regard, it is useful to recall the well-known distinction theorized by historian Alois Riegl in his seminal article *The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin* (1903) between "intentional monuments", those constructed with the explicit intention of commemorating an event or person, and "unintentional monuments", which acquire value over time due to their survival and the evolving cultural and historical significance attributed to them.

Monument in New Orleans, initially erected to celebrate white supremacy but later reinterpreted as a symbol of the civil rights struggle.

The *arena* metaphor frames monuments as spaces of political conflict and debate where competing narratives vie for control of the past. Using this perspective, the geographers explore the concept of "politics of memory" (Alderman, Brasher & Dwyer, 2020, p.42), emphasizing how control over historical narratives becomes a resource to legitimize a present political order. A prominent example is the reconfiguration of Soviet-era monuments in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism. More recently, protests against Confederate monuments in the United States illustrate how memorials may become symbols of social and racial conflict. For instance, in Charlottesville, Virginia, the proposed removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee led to violence and the death of a protester (Alderman, Brasher & Dwyer, 2020, p.42).

Through the *performance* metaphor, Alderman, Brasher, and Dwyer examine how monuments and memorials are imbued with ritual significance, enacted through bodily practices such as, as mentioned earlier, protests or historical reenactments, which impart emotional and political meaning to these objects and spaces. An example are the marches by the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina, a group of female activists who transform ordinary plazas into emotional memorials through ritual marches and symbols like white headscarves, commemorating their children abducted or killed during the Argentine dictatorship (Alderman, Brasher & Dwyer, 2020, p.44). Regarding this metaphor, the scholars also highlight how, in the context of the contemporary city's *spectacularization*, phenomena such as mass tourism or city branding often exploit local memory objects, spaces, and events for commercial purposes, selectively emphasizing historical narratives that attract visitors while omitting more uncomfortable ones. For example, at the 1996 International Festival of the Sea in Bristol, UK, organizers avoided mentioning the city's role in the transatlantic slave trade. "Bristol's festival organizers presented a sanitized image of the city, prompting us to consider how commemoration involves not only a selective performance of certain historical narratives (over others) but also a decision about who should (or should not) be part of these performances" (Alderman, Brasher & Dwyer, 2020, p.45).

Lastly, the *wound (dressing)* metaphor considers monuments and memorials as representations of historical trauma and potential instruments for healing those traumas, while also recognizing that they may perpetuate injustices. For instance, Confederate monuments in the United States continue to inflict psychological harm on African Americans by symbolizing white supremacy. However, through the process of "memory-work" – "the array of creative sociopolitical processes (and the labor required to carry them out) that build the capacity to materialize memory, often in the context of opening up opportunities for marginalized people to lay claim to a sense of belonging in and through commemorative places" (Alderman, Brasher & Dwyer, 2020, p.39) – marginalized groups can transform these spaces into tools for healing. At the University of North Carolina, students and faculty symbolically renamed a building originally dedicated to a Ku Klux Klan leader in honor of Zora

Neale Hurston, an African American writer (Alderman, Brasher & Dwyer, 2020, p.46).

These perspectives demonstrate that monuments, as art objects and spaces, are never simply relics of the past but constantly live on in the present through the ways they are perceived, contested, reinterpreted, and reformulated, i.e., practiced – even through art itself. I will further discuss this strand of research later in this section (see Subsection 2.1.6), focusing on forms of contemporary artistic practice aimed at urban public space that, by interacting with the (concept of the) monument through a strongly politicized and performative attitude – such as *artivism* and the *counter-monument* – offer new ways of understanding the interaction between art and the city.

Urban aesthetics

The relationship between art and urban environments has gained new insights through the recently emerged field of *urban aesthetics* (Lehtinen, 2020, 2021). This area of study, which has taken shape within the larger domain of the *philosophy of the city* (Wittingslow et al., 2023; Bloom-Christen, 2023) since the late 1990s, offers a more comprehensive and contemporary view on the subject. Examining this research direction will provide additional context and clarity for my study, which investigates how artistic practices interact with urban change, specifically from the viewpoint of the artists themselves.

The work of philosopher Sanna Lehtinen has significantly contributed to the development of the emerging field of urban aesthetics. This field aligns with developments in aesthetic philosophy over the past thirty years, during which there has been a growing interest in the discipline's engagement with the city (Lehtinen, 2020). Lehtinen, in particular, highlights the strong influence of environmental aesthetics (Berleant, 1997; von Bonsdorff, 2002; Berleant and Carlson, 2007), a discipline that intersects with urban studies, human geography, planning theory, and architectural criticism. It focuses on the relationship between humans and the environment they inhabit and interact with. This field also emphasizes the importance of how spaces are both perceived and conceived – i.e., how they are practiced by individuals. In essence, the aim is to "assess how the urban lifeworld is processed in the human experience" (Lehtinen, 2020, p.2). Urban aesthetics, therefore, does not limit itself to providing a purely theoretical analysis of the aesthetic relationship between individuals and the urban environment but also involves practical and pragmatic aspects, as well as applications such as to urban policies, and the contributions of professionals like artists, architects, urban planners, and others.

In this sense, the aesthetic-philosophical study of the city, Lehtinen argues, requires diverse – i.e., interdisciplinary – approaches to fully understand the impact of urban space on citizens' daily lives. The integration of urban aesthetics into the broader interdisciplinary movement of the philosophy of the city, which explores the aesthetic, political, social, and ethical dynamics of contemporary cities, demonstrates such an inclusive attitude toward the study of the city. As places of

intense human activity and social interaction, cities are conceived in this context as spaces of aesthetic contention, where contrasting values manifest through choices and decisions such as those related to urban design, planning, and, importantly, the use of public space. In line with this conception, the city is primarily understood from a temporal perspective. This means that contemporary cities must necessarily be interpreted as dynamic entities (Lehtinen, 2021, p.32). They are subject to continuous transformations due to a variety of factors, including numerous processes of construction, demolition, maintenance, and rebuilding of structures. However, beyond intentional changes, such as those planned by urban authorities, there are also unintentional modifications, such as those caused by natural phenomena or human actions – for example, natural disasters or acts of terrorism: "the experiential repercussions of the city as a process are very complex and go often beyond the intended effects. The changes in how features of a city become experienced are thus difficult to plan in advance. Even with careful planning and predicting, seemingly independent decisions accumulate into an overall aesthetic character of a place: a process in which overall aesthetic deliberation plays little role in the end. Besides this jigsaw puzzle of aesthetic elements in construing an urban place, all kinds of traces of previous generations of humans and non-humans alike are visible and expressively present in the urban landscape. The amount of cohesion and the ratio between the intended and unintended elements in cities is of course not stable, but varies according to the type of city, community, and governance model" (Lehtinen, 2021, p.33).

Lehtinen observes that throughout the 20th century, aesthetic philosophy largely concentrated on the analysis of art objects, particularly within the framework of Anglo-American analytic philosophy. For a long time, aesthetics was considered secondary to economic or social issues concerning human environments. However, beginning in the 1960s, the rise of studies in environmental aesthetics sparked a broader debate on the significance of aesthetics in everyday life, including urban environments. In this shift, continental philosophy played a pivotal role, offering a vision of aesthetics that is more inclusive, less systematic, and more connected to everyday human experience. In this sense, the ways in which a city "looks" and "feels" (Lehtinen, 2021, p. 35) are not solely determined by architecture or urban design but are also deeply shaped by how people live in and interact with the city in their daily lives, engaging with both human and non-human elements. From this perspective, the experience of urban space challenges any strict division between what is considered natural and what is anthropogenic: "any projected false dichotomies of 'natural nature' and the human-originating technological engagement evaporate in close contact with the perceptual sphere of the city itself. In fact, the city is formed perceptually as a constellation of places, cityscapes, objects, living creatures, trajectories, and interactions of various kinds" (Lehtinen, 2021, p. 35). Lehtinen specifically cites contributions from phenomenology and somaesthetics – a branch of aesthetics initiated by American philosopher Richard Shusterman (Shusterman, 2008) – as particularly effective approaches to studying urban life, highlighting how these perspectives have

contributed to understanding the city as a space experienced on both an aesthetic and ethical level. To further frame the field of urban aesthetics, Lehtinen proposes two points of aesthetic observation of the city: a "macro" and a "micro" perspective (Lehtinen, 2020, p.3). The "macro" perspective refers to the "look" of a city, meaning its overall image, which may include its monuments, the style of its buildings, the organization of its infrastructure, and other distinctive features that give the city a specific character or identity. This perspective "is very often the first approximation of what is meant by urban aesthetics" (Lehtinen, 2020, p.2). However, such a level of analysis is of central importance today more than ever, as numerous cities seek to develop an aesthetic image of themselves that is as recognizable as possible – a phenomenon often driven by cultural-based territorial marketing strategies such as the previously mentioned *city branding*.

The "micro" perspective, on the other hand, more closely examines the daily and personal experiences of individuals who live in and interact with the urban space, and with each other within it. This approach, developed alongside the field of *everyday aesthetics* (Kupfer, 1983; Leddy, 2005; Naukkarinen, 2021), focuses on the experience of the individual, understood as the subjective, cognitive, sensory, and affective perception of the urban environment. Here, Lehtinen emphasizes the importance of bodily and multisensory perception in understanding the urban environment from an aesthetic point of view, as daily life in cities is characterized by continuous and mutual interaction with a variety of aesthetic stimuli: "emphasis on multisensory, embodied, and interactive experiences is especially relevant when studying the diversity of aesthetic stimuli in urban environments. In the urban context, the human population is actively engaged not only in planning and building but, perhaps most importantly, in using and inhabiting these environments" (Lehtinen, 2020, p.3).

According to Lehtinen, one of the many productive intersections between these perspectives is the study of the production and consumption – or the experience – of art in urban public spaces. This includes forms such as "public art, monuments, street art, graffiti, and performances," which are "studied in the context of urban aesthetics, linked by definition to the location and situations in which they become perceived" (Lehtinen, 2020, p. 6). In this context, monuments and other public artworks are not merely aesthetic objects placed within the urban environment; rather, from a perceptual standpoint, they are integral elements of people's daily experiences. They can shape how individuals relate to urban space, serving, for example, as habitual landmarks for those who navigate the city. Their constant material presence subtly influences the perception of the urban environment and contributes to the gradual formation of an "aesthetic attitude" (Lehtinen, 2019, p. 34) toward a specific urban space or the city as a whole: "the everyday interaction with public artworks is potentially a more democratic form of acquiring art experiences, in the sense that it takes place in unrestricted, free outdoor spaces. Also, the viewer allocates their free time to experience the work; traditional monumental sculpture is available all day, seven days a week. The traditional materials used are enduring—stone, bronze, or steel sculptures require very little

maintenance work. These types of monuments are usually situated in city centers or more affluent neighborhoods near the center, which inevitably affects how an audience is formed, and who experiences the work in question each day. [...] This way of understanding art relies on its 'power that tears experience of ordinariness'. The physical and material features of artworks become prominent in the urban environment: dirt, noise, vegetation and all other unplanned factors are present. The features of the artwork and its environment become meshed in various ways: when a seagull is sitting on the top of the statue or when the rain changes the color of its material. The detachment of art from life becomes routinely questioned in those random daily interactions that take place in urban environments. Public monuments become a part of an urban ecosystem, where everything happens in relation to something seemingly incongruent" (Lehtinen, 2019, p.36).

2.1.2 Who is the 'artist'? Approaches to defining artists

Within the studies exploring the intersection between art and the city, and in line with the objectives of my study, it is now crucial to critically examine the figure of *the artist*, especially given the conceptual ambiguities and contestations that permeate contemporary definitions. A review of recent literature reveals both convergences and divergences in how the term 'artist' is understood, reflecting the dynamic interplay of historical traditions, economic frameworks, and subjective experiences.

Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek (2017) underscore the complexity of defining 'artist' due to the multiplicity of criteria and perspectives in contemporary discourse. They highlight a lingering romanticized perception of artists as uniquely gifted individuals—a legacy of historical views—contrasted with the modern instrumentalization of creativity in urban policy and economic development. This tension underscores a fundamental divergence: while traditional views position the artist as an independent creative genius, contemporary frameworks often emphasize their role within broader socio-economic structures, such as the "creative city" (Landry, 2008) and "creative class" (Florida, 2002, 2012). The growing alignment of artistic identity with notions of creativity as an economic asset introduces a critical ambiguity, rendering the definition of "artist" increasingly fluid and context-dependent. Creativity is no longer perceived exclusively as a personal quality but is viewed as a social and economic value, making it more challenging to arrive at a precise and shared definition of who an 'artist' is.

What seems to emerge instead is a multiplicity of definitions. In Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek's discussion, the definition of an artist can vary depending on the context—be it media, political, or academic. For instance, artists may be identified based on their skills or the activities they perform, or they may be recognized as members of a professional or social group that shares a "bohemian" or "artistic" lifestyle (Lloyd, 2010; Comunian et al., 2010, 2011). According to the authors, such attempts at definition include both *objective criteria*, such as the level of income derived from artistic work, formal education received (e.g., degrees from

art academies), and more *subjective aspects*, such as self-perception and lifestyle. However, they also observe that this multiplicity of definitions has often lead to the notion of 'artist' being used in an unreflective and frequently vague manner, creating confusion in public discourse and cultural policies.

One approach to defining the artist is based on the concept of "*cultural capital*," introduced by Pierre Bourdieu (1984). In this context, an artist is defined as a person who possesses a particular type of cultural capital, expressed through artistic skills and the ability to transform these skills into cultural goods. According to this view, artists are individuals who have institutional recognition of their artistic competencies, for example, through an art degree or recognition by professional or cultural organizations.

Another approach cited defines artists based on the proportion of their income derived from artistic activities or the time they dedicate to such activities. This approach is typical of research on artistic labor markets. A definition proposed by Markusen and King (2003) identifies artists as individuals who declare themselves as such and who earn most of their income from artistic activities.

A further distinction highlighted by the scholars concerns the separation between *creative artists* and *performers*. Creative artists include those who produce original artworks such as painters, sculptors, writers, and composers. These individuals often work independently and are usually freelancers or self-employed. Performers, on the other hand, such as actors, musicians, and dancers, are more dependent on artistic organizations and institutions. The distinction between these two groups is also linked to copyright: creators enjoy full copyright over their works, while performers benefit from related or neighboring rights. However, Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek acknowledge that the distinctions between these groups are often blurred, as an artist may take on different roles and practice multiple artistic genres simultaneously. This is especially true for many forms of artistic practice in urban public spaces – which I will discuss shortly – that display a pronounced characteristic of "hybridization" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.98) between different genres and forms of artistic production. This hybridity exemplifies a key point of divergence: while some definitions seek to delineate clear categories, others acknowledge the dynamic and interwoven nature of artistic practices.

Another central element in the various definitions of the 'artist' is the issue of *social recognition* of the artist and their *professional identity*. According to studies conducted by David Throsby and Anita Zednik (2010) on the work of professional artists in Australia, an individual can be considered an artist if they are recognized as such by their peers or the public, or if their work meets the standards of professionalism within their specific artistic sector. Throsby and Zednik use the concept of "professionalism" as one of the central criteria for defining an artist. This notion is based on the degree of commitment and dedication an individual has toward their art and their adherence to recognized standards of professionalism within their artistic field. For example, a professional artist is someone who fully commits to their artistic practice, adhering to quality and professional standards

acknowledged in their field. This might include attending art schools, obtaining degrees, exhibiting in renowned galleries, or receiving funding and grants for their work. In other words, according to this perspective, to be considered an 'artist' it is not enough to simply create works of art; these works must also be recognized as such within a professional and cultural context. However, this recognition is not static; it depends on the evolving cultural institutions and artistic communities in which the artist operates. A crucial aspect in this sense is how artists obtain social recognition. This recognition can come occur at different levels. (1) *Peer recognition* is particularly important in the art world. Artists often seek the approval of their colleagues and broader artistic communities. Having a work accepted or admired by peers, or being invited to participate in exhibitions or artistic projects alongside established colleagues, can be a sign of success and professional legitimacy. Besides recognition from peers, artists can gain legitimacy and visibility through (2) *broader public recognition*, including art critics, media, and institutions such as museums, galleries, and cultural organizations. Having a work exhibited in a recognized institution, receiving awards or public grants, or simply gaining a certain following among the public are all forms of social recognition that contribute to building an artistic identity. Finally, cultural, academic, or state institutions often play a crucial role in conferring legitimacy to artists through (3) *institutional recognition*. For example, being included in professional registries, academies, or artistic associations, or receiving funding and grants from national cultural councils, is formal recognition that can significantly impact an artist's identity and career. Institutional recognition is often accompanied by more rigid and formal criteria, such as having obtained degrees in the arts or passing selection processes based on artistic merit. The interplay between these forms of recognition reveals tensions: not all artists achieve equal access to these legitimizing structures, and self-perception often diverges from external validation. This disjunction underscores a critical divergence in how artistic identity is both constructed and contested.

Alongside an approach to defining the artist based on objective criteria, many scholars also highlight the importance of *subjective processes of self-perception and self-assessment*, and therefore self-definition, for many artists. Self-perception plays a crucial role in artistic identity: many individuals consider themselves 'artists' regardless of professional training, institutional recognition, or commercial success. This subjective aspect is particularly prevalent in contexts where art is seen as a vocation rather than a 'traditional' profession. In such cases, being an artist may mean living and thinking creatively, associating this identity with bohemian, nonconformist, or subversive lifestyles. This approach is particularly evident in artistic practices directed at urban public space, especially those forms that operate outside of programs funded by cultural institutions or local governments, such as, for example, unauthorized street art.

This more inclusive approach to defining an artist also allows for the consideration of those who operate on the margins of official institutions or who have not received commercial or institutional recognition but are nonetheless

significantly engaged in artistic creation. This self-definition can be strongly influenced by the social and cultural context, including the urban environment in which the artist lives. In this regard, the analysis by Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek suggests that in many cases, artists see themselves as such due to a creative "calling" or a sense of duty to contribute to the cultural sphere, even when there are no tangible elements (such as income or professional titles) to support this identity. The concept of self-definition introduces a subjective dimension into the analysis of artistic identity. Following this broad perspective, Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek also refer to the definition of 'artist' proposed in the UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist*: "Artist is taken to mean any person who creates or gives creative expression to, or re-creates works of art, who considers his artistic creation to be an essential part of his life, who contributes in this way to the development of art and culture and who is or asks to be recognized as an artist, whether or not he is bound by any relations of employment or association" (UNESCO, 1980, p.5).

According to Howard Becker (1982) and Eliot L. Freidson (1986), even artists who work in a *non-professional* or *amateur* capacity, but who are engaged in artistic practices, should be included in the discourse on art. Becker, in particular, speaks of "art worlds" in which non-professional, amateur, or hobbyist artists can be considered part of the artistic landscape if they are engaged in "serious" artistic practices (Mitchell and Karttunen, 1992). According to this view, an artist does not necessarily have to operate within the circuits of the art market or be recognized by institutions to be considered as such; what matters is their sustained commitment to their artistic practice and the way the individual simultaneously perceives themselves and is perceived within their social context.

Self-definition can also influence the behavior and life choices of artists. Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek (2017) note that many artists see their identity not only as something related to the production of artworks but as a way of life. This conception of *art as a lifestyle* leads many to seek communities of peers with similar conceptions of creative life, reinforcing their identity as artists through interaction and dialogue with others who share the same values. This often translates into alternative forms of living and working, which may include rejecting traditional career models, embracing greater flexibility and fluidity between different forms of art, and constantly seeking new spaces for expression. In this sense, an important aspect is the potential disconnect between self-definition and external or formal recognition. Many artists strongly identify as such, even if they do not achieve economic success or public recognition. While this disconnect can be a source of frustration, it can also lead to greater creative freedom for artists, who may feel less constrained by external expectations and more able to explore new creative paths without commercial pressures.

Furthermore, artistic identity is understood as something dynamic and constantly evolving. Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek emphasize that many artists go through different phases in their careers and lives, during which they may develop a different perception of themselves and their role. Self-definition can therefore

change in a relational context, within specific settings: with the evolution of personal and professional experiences, relationships with cultural institutions, and opportunities that arise in the art market and, for some, outside of it.

Jennifer C. Lena and Danielle J. Lindemann (2014) emphasize the importance of social networks in defining artistic identity. In line with Becker's (1982) theorization, these scholars argue that an artist is someone who is "*embedded*" within an artistic network and who identifies as such through their interactions with other members of the artistic community. This integration into the network not only helps to define the artist's identity but also provides crucial support, facilitating professional opportunities and the creation of social bonds essential for career development.

An additional aspect that emerges as central in the definition of the 'artist' concerns the challenges artists face in balancing their artistic practice with economic demands. This aspect tends to emerge particularly among practitioners operating in urban public spaces. These tensions arise from the fact that artists are often viewed as figures driven by a creative vocation, yet they must also confront the economic realities that influence the funding, production, and potential commercialization of their works (Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek, 2017). Much artistic work is not exclusively guided by creative motives but also by economic logics, as highlighted by the studies of Doris Ruth Eikhof and Axel Haunschild (2007). These scholars argue that, despite the enduring romantic notion of the artist as an independent 'creative genius,' it is impossible to completely separate them from the economic context in which they operate. Artistic works need to be integrated into broader organizational structures, such as those described by Becker (1982), and these structures often require artists to engage with or respond to market dynamics. Moreover, artists frequently face a dilemma between their creative desires and the expectations of the institutions from which they receive funding. This creates a tension between artistic goals and professional objectives, with significant pressure to conform to commercial expectations, often at the expense of their creative freedom (Elsbach and Caldwell-Wenman, 2015). This tension is described as an "identity dilemma," as artists must navigate between two poles: on the one hand, the perception of art as a unique and 'pure' mission, free from economic motivations, and on the other, the idea that art must also represent a practical means of financial sustenance (Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek, 2017, p.9). As a result, many artists resist the commercialization of their works, viewing this process as a compromise of artistic values. Others, however, accept the necessity of selling their works or financing them through both private and public resources, seeing this as an inevitable aspect of their profession.

Now, returning to the artist's perspective on their own artistic identity – namely, their self-definition – through a contextual and relational lens, it is important to mention here the work of Ruben A. Gaztambide-Fernández (2008), who theorized three main perspectives that focus on how artists understand their work and identity, as well as how society expects them to fulfill certain roles. Artists as "*cultural civilizers*" create primarily for the pure purpose of artistic expression

("*art for art's sake*"). They are seen as unique intellectuals, endowed with special talents that allow them to produce symbolic works rather than utilitarian objects. This concept of the artist as a 'creative genius' has roots in the Renaissance and contrasts with the role of artisans, whose work is tied to the production of primarily utilitarian objects. For artists as "*border crossers*", the focus shifts to the political and social role of the artist. According to this approach, the value of the artist's work lies in its ability to challenge and transcend social boundaries. Artists use symbols to provoke social change and transformation, making their work a tool of activism and political engagement, rather than being valuable only for its aesthetic or artistic merit, in a logic defined as "*art for politics*" (Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek, 2017, p.9; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2008, p.245). Finally, for those artists defined as "*representators*", the salience of art is linked to how the public interacts with it, particularly concerning identity ("*art for identity's sake*"). For them, the value of the artwork lies not only in its creation but also in how it resonates with the audience, allowing for reflection and exploration of identity-related issues. This perspective focuses on the relational and interactive aspects of art, emphasizing the central role of the artist in signifying and expressing collective or individual identities.

Moving to the specific focus of this study – the relationship between urban artistic production and the city – in her ethnographic research on the production of public art across Italy and the United States, Silvia Mazzucotelli Salice (2015) identifies five types of artists, or "*public artists*" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.102). Through interviews and observations conducted with artists active in four cities across these two geographic contexts, her work highlights the relationships between these urban-based artists and the traditional contemporary art world. According to Mazzucotelli Salice, "*celebrities*" are established artists in the contemporary art scene who approach public art without fully embracing its foundational values, such as co-authorship and public engagement. Their works are often conceived in studios and executed by craftsmen, with little dialogue with the social context, serving as examples of "art *in* public space" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.109, emphasis added). The "*opportunists*" are mainly young artists who see public art as an economic opportunity to self-finance their work. Trained in traditional academies, they use the proceeds from public art commissions to support their work within the conventional art system. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the United States, where public commissions offer significant compensation. The "*equilibrists*", on the other hand, successfully maintain a balance between working in public art and contemporary art without compromising either domain. They view these two spheres as compatible and strive to give the public what it desires while maintaining their creative voice. The fourth category consists of "*engaged artists*", who dedicate themselves almost exclusively to public art and have limited contact with the contemporary art world. They see public art as an alternative to the traditional art system, with their works aiming to promote social inclusion, urban regeneration, and civic participation, often integrating with urban planning strategies. Finally, the "*radicals*" represent the most extreme and least numerous

category. These artists have no ties to the contemporary art world and view public art as a form of political activism centered on direct community involvement. They interpret their work as a mission, pursuing their artistic commitment without seeking material benefits. This typology aligns with Sari Karttunen's (1998) dichotomous notion of "*integrated/non-integrated professionals*", where the artist defines themselves and their work based on the degree of 'integration' within the conventional or institutional contemporary art world.

Similarly to Mazzucotelli Salice's work, a more recent empirical study on the relationship between artists, their creative work, and city politics, conducted by the interdisciplinary group comprising Merav Kaddar, Volker Kirchberg, Nir Barak, Milena Seidl, Patricia Wedler, and Avner de Shalit (2020), identifies types of "*critical urban artists*" (Kaddar et al., 2020) based on a model composed of three dimensions or significant characteristics of their political behavior in the city: "*civic participation*", "*contestation of political power*", and "*perceived efficacy*". Kaddar et al. aim to analyze the different types of artistic works and interventions in cities concerning their political attitudes, based on interviews and focus groups conducted in four cities in Germany and Israel: Hamburg, Hanover, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem. The particular relevance of this study lies in its proposal of a typology based on the subjective perception of artists regarding their political and social role within various specific urban contexts, which emerges through qualitative and comparative exploration of the situated creative practice of the artists themselves. In particular, the Kaddar et al. emphasize the importance of considering art not only as a tool for urban regeneration but also as a means of social and political change. According to the scholars, the three aforementioned dimensions combine through the artistic work of the artists in their cities, giving rise to five types of critical urban artists. Similar to the "celebrities" identified by Mazzucotelli Salice (2015), the first typology proposed by Kaddar et al., the "*autonomous artist*", is one who does not participate in the political life of the city, does not contest political power, nor seeks to influence social transformation. For these artists, art is a purely aesthetic practice, independent of any political intent. The "*social artivist*", on the other hand, is committed to improving social life through their art but avoids direct confrontation with political power. According to Kaddar et al., these artists actively participate in community life, believing in the effectiveness of their artistic action but prefer to focus on social rather than political issues. The "*political artist*" views their work as a form of full-fledged political contestation, even though they do not actively participate in civic life. In this case, art in urban public space is used to express criticism of the current socio-political situation without necessarily aiming to suggest or initiate immediate practical change. Conversely, the "*political artivist*" combines civic participation with strong contestation of political power. They not only use art to express criticism but also actively seek to change existing political structures, firmly believing in the effectiveness of their art in provoking social transformations. Finally, the "*high-status artist*" typology represents artists who have gained high status in the art world and use their prestige to influence urban politics. These artists may or may not be directly involved in political contestation,

but their status gives them a strong sense of efficacy, that is, a high perception of their ability to influence social transformation. Kaddar et al. conclude that all the cities examined show a presence, albeit variably distributed, of all the proposed types of artists, suggesting that this approach could serve as a valuable theoretical tool for analyzing the activities of urban artists, starting with an assessment of their political engagement within urban space. However, they leave the door open for further research, proposing that there may be a correlation between the character of a city and the prevalence of a particular type of artist. They hypothesize that cities influence artists' perceptions of their agency – not only political agency – and the ways in which they structure their artistic practice in relation to those urban contexts.

I believe that Kaddar et al.'s study highlights an interesting research perspective, clearly underscoring the need for greater attention to the artist self-perception and of their situated practice. This practice is not only something the artist performs but also experiences and signifies within a specific context that is simultaneously spatial, cultural, social, political, and economic, and that should be understood as dynamic and constantly changing.

2.1.3 What kind of 'things' do artists do, and how do they participate in city transformations?

So far, I have discussed various approaches to defining the artist, both broadly and more specifically related to their presence and practice within urban spaces and development processes. But what does this 'artist,' so variously defined, *actually do* to contribute to the transformation of the city? I believe it is important, first of all, to clarify what type of art we are talking about. Most of the artistic practices directed at urban public space fall within what Nathalie Heinich (2014) defines as the *"paradigm" of contemporary art*. While I will not discuss the specifics of what 'contemporary art' is here, it can generally be said, from a historical perspective, that it encompasses both visual and performative artistic production that has developed since the 1960s. However, I will focus on discussing some key characteristics of this "paradigm," drawing on Heinich's work on contemporary artistic practices.

In her contribution to the seminal volume *Artistic Practices: Social Interactions and Cultural Dynamics* edited by sociologist Tasos Zembylas (2014), Heinich offers a detailed and pragmatic analysis of the evolution and paradigm shift in the art world. The sociologist argues that contemporary art should not be seen simply as a chronological category but as a "new paradigm" (Heinich, 2014, p.32), a concept borrowed from Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions (1962). According to Heinich, contemporary art represents a break with previous artistic movements. It is not merely a continuation of modern art but a structural change, or artistic revolution, that has completely transformed the way art is conceived and presented. This new paradigm is not limited to a stylistic or aesthetic modification but involves a profound change in artistic practices, modes of evaluation of works,

and systems of recognition. Heinich's analysis is based on an approach which focuses specifically on the material, social, and axiological (value-related) conditions that define what is treated and thus defined as 'art.' Adopting a pragmatic sociological perspective, which emerged in France in the 1990s and was influenced by American pragmatism and linguistic theory, Heinich's analysis favors the empirical observation of actions in their contexts, while distancing itself from Pierre Bourdieu's theories. Operatively speaking, Heinich's methodology is primarily descriptive, analyzing human actions, their cultural products, and the symbolic frameworks that determine how art is understood, evaluated, and defined. In her analysis, Heinich argues that contemporary art is characterized by a principle of *boundary transgression*. For example, while classical art focused on figuration and modern art emphasized the autonomy of the artist and their production, contemporary art breaks with both, challenging the very concept of art itself. Contemporary art encompasses not only objects but also time-based events such as installations, performances, video projections, and large-scale photographs, which defy traditional categories. According to Heinich, this shift underscores the move to a new paradigm in the art world.

A key point in this regard is the *status of the artwork* itself. Heinich argues that contemporary artworks go beyond their material form. The artwork is not just the physical object but also includes the actions, processes, interpretations, and social contexts surrounding it. To illustrate this, Heinich references Marcel Duchamp's 1917 work *Fountain,* demonstrating that the true value of the piece does not lie in the 'urinal' object but in the events, actions, and meanings that caused it to 'become' a work of art and be recognized as such: "In *Fountain,* the artwork does not reside in the materiality of the proposed object (here, a urinal) but in the act of proposing it for an exhibition at the Society of Independent Artists; in the many stories telling how it was not exhibited, and how it finally came out again some forty years later as replicas sold to a few galleries and museums; in the many protests or even acts of vandalism that it gave rise to; and in the endless commentaries that are still constructing its legend, etc. That is to say, the artwork has come out of the object made by the artist in order to invest contexts, words, actions, things, and numbers… Hence, the importance of context in contemporary art: here, you cannot tell the story of *Fountain* without mentioning and explaining the context of the Salon des Indépendants, the absence of a jury there and the presence of Duchamp as one of the organizers, among others" (Heinich, 2014, p.35). This leads to a broader discussion on the importance of context and of what actually constitutes a contemporary artwork, suggesting its simultaneous material and immaterial composition. To this purpose, Heinich observes that contemporary art has diversified both the materials and the modes of presentation of its products, greatly surpassing traditional ones. Installations, performances, land art, body art, video, murals, digital media, and net art have become integral to the vocabulary of contemporary artists, consequently implying the combined use of often very different media. This represents a significant difference from classical and modern art, which for centuries used a limited number of well-defined materials, such as

oil, watercolor, pencil, bronze, stone, etc. An example of this diversification is the description of unusual materials used in contemporary artworks: "tin," "felt and grease," "acoustic modules," "TV monitors," "variable dimensions." Even just reading the description of a work based on unconventional materials, one can intuit that it belongs to contemporary art, precisely because of its distance from traditional materials.

This renewed understanding extends to the *discourse* surrounding the artwork as well. Heinich argues that in contemporary art, the text, the explanation, or the interpretation of the artwork all become essential for understanding and appreciating it, if not even necessary and sometimes obligatory for interacting with it (Heinich, 2014, p.36). According to Heinich, this phenomenon responds to common criticisms that contemporary art lacks meaning. On the contrary, the meaning of the artwork is often developed not solely within the physical artifact but also relationally: through its context, its interaction with that context, and its existence within it. Consequently, meaning is also shaped by the discourses and narratives that surround the artwork. Naturally, Heinich points out, the diversification of materials and the integration of unconventional and often intangible elements opens a broad debate on new solutions for the preservation and restoration of contemporary artworks.

Since contemporary artworks challenge common expectations, they require a series of *mediations* to be understood and placed within a certain art world. These mediations include professionals such as curators, art critics, gallery owners, experts, and art historians, but also institutions such as museums, art centers, and galleries. Additionally, mediators can include physical objects like frames, lighting, catalogs, and numerical details (such as prices and dates of the works), as well as intangible elements like mental representations or, as Sherri Irvin (2022) argues, actual *rules* – whether written or verbal, implicit or explicit – created by artists for the production, interaction, and preservation of contemporary artworks. I will explore this topic in greater detail later in this chapter. Indeed, many contemporary artworks today exist only in the form of written or visual documents such as contracts, certificates, or maps, rather than as physical objects. Consider, for example, conceptual art, and particularly the work of artist Sol LeWitt, who produced numerous instructions in written document form (e.g., Figure 1) for the execution of drawings and wall paintings.[3]

[3] On conceptual and conceptualist art, see also the works of Caldarola (2020) and Irvin (2022).

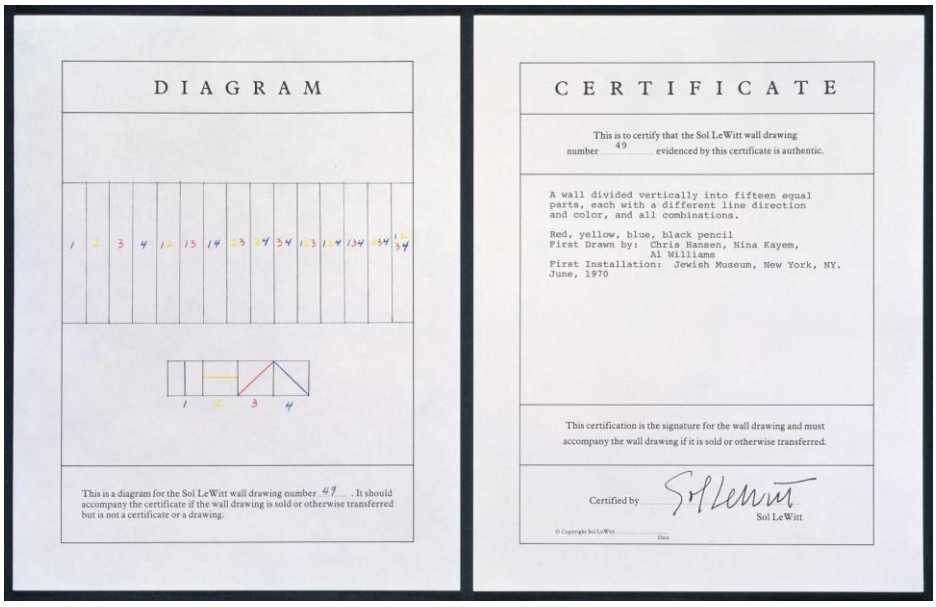


Figure 1: The certificate and diagram constituting the rules for the realization of the artwork *A Wall Divided Vertically into Fifteen Equal Parts, Each with a Different Line Direction and Color, and All Combinations,* by Sol LeWitt, 1970. Source: Tate Collection.

LeWitt, not coincidentally, introduced the notion of conceptual art, identifying works of art in which "the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art. This kind of art is not theoretical or illustrative of theories; it is intuitive, it is involved with all types of mental processes and it is purposeless" (LeWitt, 1967, p.79).

Along with the media of the works and its production practices, the spaces of art are also changing. Heinich observes that the space of the contemporary art world is radically different from that of modern art. Today, the contemporary art world has become internationalized, with artists constantly traveling between urban centers scattered worldwide (Heinich, 2014, p.39). This *nomadic* and cosmopolitan aspect has become, according to Heinich, essential for contemporary artists, particularly those working on site-specific installations or performances (e.g., Figure 2) that require their physical presence in one or more geographical locations, as is also evident in the production of many works for urban public spaces.



Figure 2: The performance-based artwork *Training Ground,* by Public Movement, which took place in Melbourne City Square, Australia, 2015. Source: Australian Centre for Contemporary Art website.

More recently, a significant contribution to the articulation of the concept of contemporary artistic practice, particularly relevant to the production of art directed at urban public spaces, is what Ditte Vilstrup Holm and Timon Beyes (2022) have described as the "*art's organizational turn*", where "art becomes organization by experimenting with forms and processes of emancipatory organizing" (Holm and Beyes, 2022, p.1). In their attempt to propose a model that aligns the common characteristics of contemporary art and entrepreneurship as forms of emancipatory organization, the two organizational scholars examine how contemporary art has shifted its focus from creating artistic objects to broader organizational practices, with an increasing emphasis on social, political, and activist engagement. This conceptualization aligns with the contemporary art model introduced by Heinich. Holm and Beyes trace an extensive genealogy of this phenomenon, basing their analysis on Nicolas Borriaud's (2002) *relational aesthetics* and Peter Osborne's (2013) concept of *organizational intent*.

The scholars argue that the development of this 'turn' has been shaped by three main currents in contemporary art. The first is *participatory art*, which challenges the traditional view of art as autonomous creation (Bishop, 2012). Artists within this current involve the public as active participants, transforming the aesthetic experience into foundational processes of organization and collaboration in the production of the artwork itself. A key example is Rirkrit Tiravanija's work *untitled 1990 (pad thai)* (1990), which transformed a Soho gallery into a street kitchen where he served *pad thai* to visitors, creating a space of social interaction. Similarly, artist Jeremy Deller (2001) reenacted the 1984 *Battle of Orgreave*, a participatory performance in the form of a historical reenactment of the clashes between striking South Yorkshire miners and the British police, emphasizing the emotional importance of this event (Holm and Beyes, 2022, p.7) – one of the most violent confrontations in British industrial history.

The second current identified by Holm and Beyes is *institutional critique*. This line of development focuses on questioning the role of artistic institutions in social power relations and, therefore, challenging their spaces as neutral. Classic examples include the performative works of Andrea Fraser such as *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk* (1989), or those of Hans Haacke, who in 1971 shed light on the living conditions in Manhattan slums by exposing the controversial economic ties between artistic institutions and the landlords of those areas in New York City. Institutional critique later expanded to examine not only the institutions themselves but also the role of the artist within these systems and the resulting power dynamics (Holm and Beyes, 2022, p.7).

Finally, the Holm and Beyes highlight a third current in the shifts that artistic production directed at urban public spaces has undergone, toward what Claire Doherty (2009) defines as "*situational artistic practices*", or "*new genre public art*" as termed by Suzanne Lacy (1995). According to this current, since at least the 1990s, public art has been redefined, shifting away from the sculptural tradition toward specific interventions that address local and public issues. As Lacy argued, these practices are essentially forms of "visual art that uses both traditional and nontraditional media to communicate and interact with a broad and diversified audience about issues directly relevant to their lives" (Lacy, 1995, p.19). These practices lie at the intersection of art and activism, addressing political issues such as inequalities and injustices. For example, Suzanne Lacy, Annice Jacoby, and Chris Johnson's work *The Roof is on Fire* (1993-1994) (Figure 3) involved Oakland teenagers in public conversations broadcasted on the radio, focusing on their experiences with racial stereotypes (Holm and Beyes, 2022, p.7). I will explore this particular current in more detail later in this section.



Figure 3: A scene from the artwork *The Roof is on Fire,* by Suzanne Lacy, Annice Jacoby, and Chris Johnson, which took place on the roof of a garage in Oakland, California, between 1993-1994. Source: Suzanne Lacy website.

From this genealogy, three key concepts emerge that characterize contemporary art's ability to participate in social change. First, Holm and Beyes argue that the very concept of aesthetics has been radically transformed within the context of art's so-called "organizational turn." In this sense, aesthetics, traditionally linked to the visual arts, is redefined to include a range of aesthetic forms and strategies used by artists to engage the public in bodily and dialogic experiences. The "aesthetics of organization" (Holm and Beyes, 2022, p.8) is understood as a way to encourage encounters that generate dialogue or disagreement, collaboration or conflict, as demonstrated by Kerstin Bergendal's project *Park Lek* (2010-2014) (Figure 4).



Figure 4: A moment from the artwork *Park Lek,* by Kerstin Bergendal, which took place in Sundbyberg, Sweden, between 2011-2014. Source: Kerstin Bergendal website.

The artwork effectively interfered with the official urban development plans for Sundbyberg, a suburb of Stockholm, Sweden, in the attempt to propose a parallel planning process that would avoid further segregation – succeeding in doing so.

Along with this aesthetic shift, the scholars describe the ability of certain practices and processes of contemporary art to intervene in social organizational issues. They argue, in particular, that these practices challenge capitalist and neoliberal forms of organization, seeking more equitable and collective alternatives: "the question of politics points to the profound aspirations for social change that drive these practices. In general terms, art's organizational turn is critical of contemporary society's organization, as it is seen as dominated by capitalist exploitation, neoliberal ideology, increasing inequality, and the gradual deterioration of public services, as well as, increasingly, forms of nationalist, populist and xenophobic politics" (Holm and Beyes, 2022, p.9). In these terms, contemporary artistic practices are seen as a politicized collective practice, variably focused on transforming existing organizational processes. They act as vehicles – or else, as mediators – for expressing new modes of public relations and participation. According to Holm and Beyes, this conception implies a rethinking

of politics itself, which should be understood not only as institutional confrontation but also as an aesthetic and organizational intervention. Consequently, art abandons its mere decorative function, becoming a key actor in processes of commoning, collective expression, and resistance against other existing forms of organization (Holm and Beyes, 2022, p.12).

Finally, *site-specificity* is one of the aspects that most distinguishes the "organizational turn" in contemporary art from other artistic practices of the past. Contemporary practices, particularly those directed at public spaces, do not merely consider the material conditions of a site but focus on how it transforms into a political process, extending to and simultaneously focusing on local communities and their pressing issues, or "locational identities," as extensively demonstrated by art historian Miwon Kwon's work (2002): "summarizing the development of public art from classical sculpture until today, contemporary public art has become site-specific, issue-specific and community-specific, taking its cue from the site in which it engages" (Holm and Beyes, 2022, p.10). The concept of site-specificity is understood by the scholars in relation to the "entrepreneurial" organization of contemporary art. In this sense, Holm and Beyes argue that artistic entrepreneurship is not conducted in static physical locations but rather in various and constantly changing sites, which are predominantly dynamic and procedural. Quoting Kwon, these spaces become "unsited" (Kwon, 2002, p.155, in Holm and Beyes, 2022, p.12) through artistic intervention, creating new spatial and social experiences each time. The concept of "unsiting," or the process of detaching a site from its established conventions to recombine it with new organizational elements, is fundamental to understanding how art acts as an "entrepreneurial" agent in social and political space.

Moreover, the authors note that "such sites are to a large degree in urban settings. In fact, art's organizational turn predominantly engages with contemporary urban development (Miles, 2015), reminding the study of entrepreneurship to approach city-space as the quintessential site of organization and innovation, and modes of organizing urban life as key institutional and everyday contexts of organization-creation" (Holm and Beyes, 2022, p.12; see also Miles, 1997). According to Holm and Beyes' perspective, aesthetics thus becomes a political tool that intervenes in specific locations to reorganize the social fabric. In this way, contemporary art does not merely reflect critically on existing conditions but becomes an active agent of social transformation.

Now, to provide a detailed context for my research subject, I will build upon the framework of multiple developments in contemporary art presented thus far by outlining and discussing four lines of inquiry emerging from the literature, focusing on the 'practical' implications of these developments. Specifically, I will focus on the main forms that contemporary artistic production takes in relation to urban contexts. First, I will examine the interactions between art and architecture, particularly the cross-fertilization or hybridization between artistic and architectural practices, through a further analysis of the theme of site-specificity. I will then briefly discuss some definitions of public art and various forms of socially engaged

artistic practice. Finally, I will explore the intersections between art and activism, as well as between art and memory, as artistic interventions in the urban environment.

2.1.4 Art and architecture, art and the (urban) site

The intersection of contemporary artistic practice with disciplines related to urban space design, such as architecture and urban planning, has been thoroughly examined by numerous scholars and critics, primarily from an historical-critical perspective. For this part of my discussion, I will focus on the significant interdisciplinary contribution to this debate made by architect and architectural historian Jane Rendell. In her seminal text *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (2006), Rendell explores the dense intersections between art and architecture, drawing on the critical theory of authors such as Rosi Braidotti, Walter Benjamin, Michel de Certeau, Luce Irigaray, Henri Lefebvre, Doreen Massey, and Edward Soja. Rendell provides an interdisciplinary analysis that explores how art and architecture intersect and influence each other, particularly in the context of public art and contemporary architecture. She emphasizes that this encounter occurs not only between the disciplines themselves but also between the theorizing and practicing of both art and architecture. To this purpose, Rendell introduces the concept of "*a place between*", a point of intersection that describes how art and architecture can coexist and inform each other, transcending traditional disciplinary distinctions. Through a critical analysis of site-specific works, installations, and spatial interventions realized in the UK and North America from the 1960s to the 2000s, Rendell examines how urban and public spaces can be transformed by artistic and architectural interventions, and how these spaces can serve as tools for social and cultural critique. To this end, Rendell introduces the term "*critical spatial practice*" (Rendell, 2006) to describe a specific type of interstitial intervention between art and architecture that challenges the boundaries between public and private, theory and practice, while creating new modes of interaction with urban space. Her aim is to demonstrate that art and architecture, through collaborative and especially critical processes, can not only meet functional needs but also provide new social, aesthetic, and political perspectives.

One of the main points discussed by Rendell is the concept of '*function*', where she identifies tensions and convergences between the two disciplines: "art and architecture are frequently differentiated in terms of their relationship to 'function'. Unlike architecture, art may not be functional in traditional terms, for example in responding to social needs, giving shelter when it rains, or designing a room in which to perform open-heart surgery, but we could say that art is functional in providing certain kinds of tools for self-reflection, critical thinking, and social change. Art offers a place and occasion for new kinds of relationships 'to function' between people. If we consider this expanded version of the term function in relation to architecture, we realize that architecture is seldom given the opportunity to have no function or to consider the construction of critical concepts as its most

important purpose. When art is located outside the gallery, the parameters that define it are called into question and all sorts of new possibilities for thinking about the relationship between art and architecture are opened up" (Rendell, 2006, pp. 14-15). In this context, Rendell extensively analyzes collaborative practices between artists and architects, where both parties work together to create works that are neither exclusively artistic nor purely architectural, but operate in the intermediate space she defines as "critical spatial practice". This capacity for collaboration highlights another point of convergence between the worlds of art and architecture: the critical role that art can play in relation to architecture. Rendell argues that art, being less constrained by functionality, tends to allow for greater creativity and social critique. Artists, according to this view, have the freedom to challenge not only conventions within their discipline but also broader social, political, and economic norms and hegemonic structures. In contrast, architecture, which is more closely tied to systems of power and functional demands, may find its critical potential more limited. However, Rendell acknowledges that architecture also has the capacity to be reflective and critical. At times, architecture manages to emancipate itself from economic and functional imperatives. Through a conscious use of space and design, some architects have succeeded in creating works that, beyond fulfilling practical needs, raise important questions related to social politics, history, or sustainability. Supporting Rendell's theories, eighteen years after *A Place Between*, we continue to see the emergence of practices related to the design of urban public space, where the boundaries between architecture and art are increasingly blurred and difficult to distinguish. Notable examples include the work of creative collectives such as Fosbury Architecture in Italy, or Assemble (Figure 5) and muf architecture in the UK, to name a few. These practices are particularly relevant here for their adoption of specific organizational forms in creative production, emphasizing collaborative and collective models. They often consist of strongly multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary teams, further reinforcing the convergence of art and architecture in the design of urban spaces.



Figure 5: The artwork *Fleeting Forest,* by Assemble, which took place at the German Pavilion, at Granary Square, London, 2023. Source: Assemble website.

Rendell traces the convergence between art and architecture back to the influential essay by American art critic Rosalind Krauss, *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* (1979), where Krauss introduces the concept of the "expanded field." Krauss's argument can be summarized as follows: analyzing the artistic landscape of the 1970s, she observed that sculpture was no longer confined to the traditional concept of representing autonomous or monumental three-dimensional objects. Instead, Krauss argued that sculpture was embracing new forms and spaces that intersected with architecture and landscape. Building on this critical position, Krauss introduced the notion of the "expanded field" to describe the emerging expansion of disciplinary boundaries, where artworks could no longer be neatly classified as either sculptures or mere architectural structures. Following this critical line, Rendell argues that in the contemporary context, the idea of an "expanded field" can be applied to critical spatial practices that not only cross but blur the boundaries between art, architecture, and public space design. For Rendell, art and architecture do not operate solely in physical space but also in a conceptual and critical space where artworks can transform into social and cultural interventions and critiques. In this sense, the merging of the practices of art and architecture should be understood in interdisciplinary terms as "spatial practices" (Rendell, 2006, p. 57): "we need to understand artworks as products of specific

processes, of production and reception, that operate within a further expanded and interdisciplinary field, where terms are not only defined through one discipline but by many simultaneously. If artists choose to operate at sites within, at the edge of, between and across different disciplinary territories, for example, art, architecture, design, and landscape, then they do so by adopting methods that call into question disciplinary procedures" (Rendell, 2006, p. 59).

In this regard, a significant addition to the notion of the "expanded field" provided by Rendell's work extends beyond art itself to include the curating and commissioning of works situated outside the traditional confines typically associated with art. The concept of the *site* of the artwork and its *specificity* becomes central in this context. Rendell reinterprets Krauss's "expanded field" by introducing the notions of "site," "non-site", and "off-site", terms she draws from and inverts based on the theoretical writings of American land artist Robert Smithson. She critically engages with these concepts alongside the theories of Miwon Kwon (Rendell, 2006, p. 32). In a strict sense, the concept of 'site' refers to the physical location where a work of art is situated or the geographical setting where an architectural or artistic intervention takes shape or occurs. However, according to Rendell, and in line with Kwon's arguments (2002), when we talk about 'site-specific' artworks, we are not just referring to the site as a neutral physical space. Instead, the site is a place filled with meanings, histories, narratives, discourses, events, and social realities. Site-specific artworks are created specifically for that location and cannot be easily transferred or translated elsewhere because the site itself significantly contributes to their meaning. In these cases, it is the artist who moves between different sites, *translocating* the artwork as a concept or idea – as I discussed earlier – thus making it nomadic. This perspective has been thoroughly discussed by Kwon (2002), who analyzed how, since the 1970s, many site-specific artworks – originally conceived as inseparable from their installation site – have been physically removed, reinstalled, or refabricated in different contexts. This has led to what Kwon (2002, p. 33) describes as an "unhinging" from the original site, a phenomenon taking place not only in physical terms but also conceptually. Regarding the nomadism of site-specific works, an important contribution from Kwon's research involves a critical analysis of the increasing commodification of site-specific art. Kwon notes that the principle of nomadism, once a key component of artists' critique of modern and postmodern art, now reflects the logic of global capitalist expansion. This raises the question of whether the unmooring of site-specific art represents an act of resistance or capitulation to the contemporary art market: "Even if the efficacy of site-specific art from the past seems to weaken when it is re-presented, the procedural complications, ethical dilemmas, and pragmatic headaches that such situations [of re-localizing and re-presenting a site-specific work] raise for artists, collectors, dealers, and host institutions are still meaningful. They present an unprecedented strain on established patterns of (re)producing, exhibiting, borrowing/lending, purchasing/selling, and commissioning/executing artworks in general. At the same time, while some artists revert to the traditional argument of authorial inviolability

to defend their site-specific practice, others are eager to undo the presumption of criticality associated with principles such as immobility, permanence, and unrepeatability. Rather than resisting mobilization, these artists are seeking to reinvent site specificity as a nomadic practice" (Kwon, 2002, p. 43).

Drawing on Kwon's thesis to support her arguments regarding creative production between art and architecture, Rendell observes that the concept of the 'site' has been central to the evolution of both public art and contemporary architecture, as artists and architects do not simply work within galleries or studios but engage with the urban, social, and cultural fabric of the locations they design. The site, understood broadly as both tangible and intangible, thus becomes an integral part of the artwork's message or, as philosopher Elisa Caldarola (2020, 2021) argues, a fundamental component of the artwork itself, as I will discuss later. However, it is important to note that architecture typically defines the site in physical and measurable terms rather than considering its cultural qualities (Rendell, 2006, p. 52). Nevertheless, Rendell asserts that "when architecture appears to be constructed from materials taken from the site, the rearrangement of the displaced materials aligns with the location of the physical extraction, producing the 'work' of architecture as simultaneously site and non-site. Yet photographs of that architecture might be exhibited elsewhere, creating through dissemination multiple non-sites—published works or exhibition venues. For such an interpretation to hold, it is crucial that the processes of construction, as well as the materials themselves, are 'actually' derived from the site and do not merely refer to a process of material continuity between the building and the site" (Rendell, 2006, p. 54). In this sense, architectural production approaches the artistic conception of 'site-specific' by employing production strategies that are unusual for the discipline itself.

The notion of the site as a social and cultural entity composed, ontologically speaking, of inseparable material and immaterial components and properties, is further articulated in Rendell's discussion of space as a "*practiced place*" (Rendell, 2006, p. 36). Here, Rendell draws on French theorist Michel de Certeau, who, in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (de Certeau, 1984), introduced the distinction between "place" and "space". De Certeau described a place as a stable, ordered, and delimited physical environment, while space is something more dynamic and fluid, shaped by the activities and practices of the people who inhabit it, emphasizing that only human action can transform a static place into a lived and perceived space. Building on de Certeau, for Rendell, space is not simply conceived as a backdrop for artistic or architectural production but should be understood as an active process continuously shaped by the actions, movements, and interactions of people. According to this conception, artists and architects can use the concept of space as a practiced place to create critical sites, i.e., spaces that encourage those who encounter the artwork to reflect and critically engage with the social, political, and cultural contexts in which they are immersed, live, or that they traverse in their daily lives.

In this regard, the relationship between the site and the artwork is of fundamental importance, and the concepts of "non-site" and "off-site" speak precisely to this relationship. For Robert Smithson (Rendell, 2006, p. 40), a "non-site" represents a place that is physically distant from a real site but nevertheless connected to it. The "non-site" thus consists of a representation or abstraction (tangible or intangible, such as a drawing, a printed photograph, or an orally expressed idea) of a distant site, which references that same site. The site, in this sense, is *indicated* by the artwork. This tension between "site" and "non-site" allows artists to break and play with the relationships between physical places and their symbolic representations, configuring works as metaphors or, as argued by Rendell, as "*prepositions*": "these physical things – the tea bags, the train-ticket, the photo of her grandson – like prepositions in language, allow connections to be made between people […]. As vehicles for interpersonal exchange, prepositions, in this case, the tea bags, provide the potential for transformation; through a simple conversation, by listening to another, there is always the possibility we might change and rethink the position we occupy in the world" (Rendell, 2006, p. 173). Rendell elaborates on the concept of the "non-site" in the context of her critical reflection on contemporary art and architecture, explaining that the term allows for the exploration of the boundaries between the physicality of a place and its cultural and sociopolitical representation. It emerges that, through the use of the "non-site," artists – here understood together with architects as "spatial practitioners" - raise questions about concepts of distance, memory, and interpretation of the space on and in which they operate with their art. Finally, with the concept of "off-site," Rendell delineates those artistic and architectural practices that take place outside the conventional boundaries of galleries and cultural institutions. In opposition to "site-specific," where the work is created for a specific location, "off-site" refers to the curating and production of works in decentralized locations often scattered across urban or rural contexts. According to the historian, the production of so-called "off-site" works can be understood as an artistic practice aimed at questioning the institutionalization of art and issues related to its private funding, particularly concerning public art, by taking it out of traditional venues and embedding it in the social and cultural fabric of public spaces (Rendell, 2006, p. 43). In this regard, Rendell here revisits the concept of "social sculpture" introduced by German artist Joseph Beuys in the 1970s and 1980s. Beuys argued that art was the primary means for social change, as every human being is - according to the artist - capable of contributing to the shaping of the social world through creative acts. For Beuys, art is not confined to the creation of objects or physical sculptures; it also includes social actions and human relationships and interactions, making society itself a continuously evolving sculpture. As a result, everyone can equally participate in the creation of a work of art. In doing so, the artist relinquishes the individualistic role that had defined and identified them during modernity. Rendell takes this notion and integrates it into her conceptualization of "critical spatial practice," arguing that the production of a spatial practice, if understood as "social sculpture", can mobilize communities, facilitate social dialogue, and promote

interventions aimed at change (Rendell, 2006, p. 169). This concept is particularly relevant in works involving public participation or collective collaboration, where artists do not act autonomously but in dialogue with society, i.e., with other people, in specific contexts. The artist thus becomes a facilitator or catalyst who, together with the '*Other*' (as in, other subjectivities than that of the artist), creates, or at least enables the '*Other*' to contribute to the creation of something meaningful, while also promoting social responsibility. Discussing Beuys's famous artwork *7000 Oak Trees* (1982) in Kassel (Figure 6), Rendell specifically addresses this creative attitude: "the artist set certain coordinates or parameters to determine the work, but the exact unfolding of the project was dependent on the actions of different participants. Who will choose to plant an oak and basalt marker and where will they choose to plant them? […] by participating and becoming part of the creation of a social architecture, people could become artists. For Beuys, it is not so much that life is already art, but that there is something particular to the creative process valued by artists that can transform other areas of life" (Rendell, 2006, pp. 169-170).

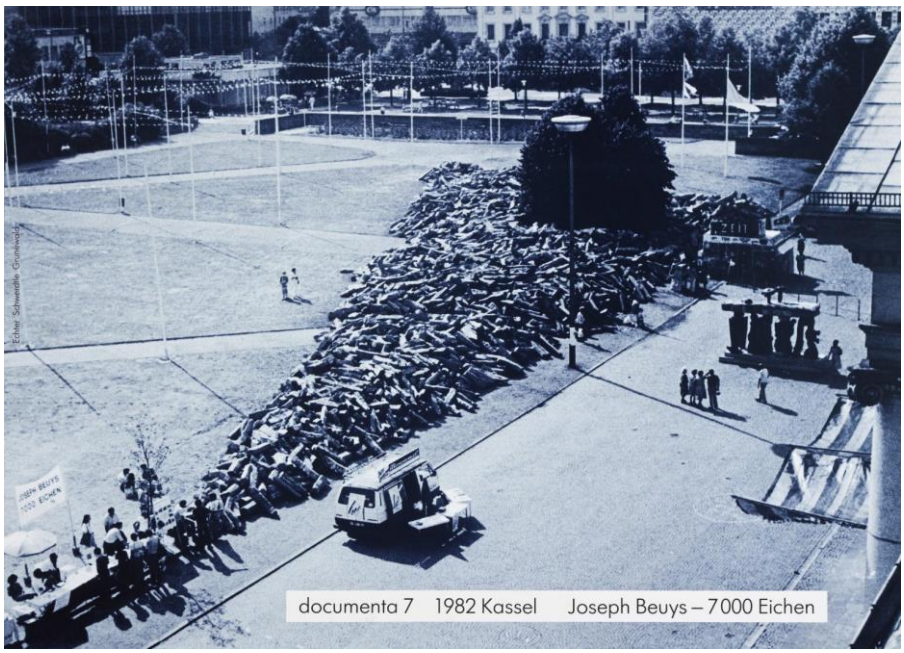


Figure 6: The artwork *7000 Oak Trees,* by Joseph Beuys, which took place in Kassel, Germany, during Documenta 7, 1982. Source: Tate Collection.

A more recent perspective on the intersection of art and architecture, particularly in the context of site-specific works related to the urban environment, is presented in analytic aesthetics philosophy by philosopher Elisa Caldarola (2021). While Rendell has focused on exploring the interdisciplinary, critical, and historical connections and developments between art and architecture, Caldarola takes an analytical and theoretical approach to examining the relationship between contemporary architectural objects and the sites where they are constructed. She aligns the analysis and conception of these objects with the discourse on site-specific artworks, proposing a unified conception of site-specific art and

architectural works. According to Caldarola, many contemporary architects, such as Snøhetta or OMA, led by architect Rem Koolhaas, have designed buildings that may be understood as "closely tied to their context" (Caldarola, 2021, p.7). However, she argues that the dynamics within the relationship between the site and the artwork - whether that of art or architecture - remain unclear. Caldarola's analysis draws from a critical examination of the debate on site-specific artworks, proposing a distinction between "*sited art*", which refers to artworks placed in a specific location, and "*site-specific art*", which refers to artworks that not only occupy a location but crucially depend on it to convey their meaning. Caldarola argues that while *all* artworks (whether contemporary or not) are situated in a physical place, only *some* can be defined as site-specific. She analyzes various cases to clarify this distinction. For example, Auguste Rodin's sculpture *Les Bourgeois de Calais* (1889) is installed in several geographically different locations, but only one of these - the installation in Calais - assumes a specific meaning in relation to the city and its history: "Understanding that it manifests the city's pride for its past is integral to one's complete appreciation of it, which is why it is reasonable to claim that the Calais square where the statue is installed is part of the medium of this artwork-instantiation" (Caldarola, 2021, p.9). Other examples include Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* (1976) or Mierle Laderman Ukeles's performance *Hartford Wash* (1973) (Figure 7). These works use their site to comment on the culture and social context in which they were produced.



Figure 7: Scenes from the artwork *Hartford Wash,* by Mierle Laderman Ukeles, which took place in Hartford, Connecticut, 1973. Source: Ronald Feldman Gallery.

Through these examples, Caldarola proposes that the key element distinguishing site-specific art from other forms of situated art is its ability to *use the site to articulate content related to the historical, social, or cultural context of its production*: "site-specific artworks and artwork-instantiations are, certainly, sited artworks and artwork-instantiations: their media consist of particular material objects or events plus portions of the environments in which they are located or take

place" (Caldarola, 2021, p.10). This proposition forms a fundamental point in my theoretical framework, which I will elaborate on in Section 2.3. Caldarola applies this conceptualization to the relationship between the production of architectural objects and their specific contexts. She argues that while all architectural objects are situated in a physical space and can therefore be considered "sited architecture" (Caldarola, 2021, p.13), only some buildings are truly site-specific in the sense that they crucially use their site to convey a cultural or social message. An exemplary case of site-specific architecture proposed by Caldarola is the *Norwegian National Opera and Ballet* in Oslo, designed by Snøhetta. In her analysis, Caldarola demonstrates how the building physically integrates with the surrounding urban and natural landscape - a short stretch of fjord - using its location to establish both a material and immaterial link between the fjord and the city. In this sense, the site is understood as the *medium* of the architectural work.

As previously discussed by both Rendell (2006) and Kwon (2002), Caldarola also addresses the issue of the 'nomadism' in site-specific art, tackling the topic of relocating both artworks and architectures. She argues that site-specific artworks cannot be relocated without necessarily losing their essential meaning, as their relationship with the site where they are installed is integral to their ability to convey content related to the historical, social, and cultural context of their production. An example of this phenomenon is Katharina Fritsch's famous temporary installation *Hahn/Cock* (2013–2015) at Trafalgar Square in London. If the sculpture were relocated to a different site without the same historical and symbolic connotations - and thus removed from the unfinished equestrian statue pedestal for which it was conceived - it would no longer be able to convey the critique of masculine and imperialistic power that it expresses in its original context (Caldarola, 2021, p.12).[4] For architecture, however, relocation can have a different impact depending on whether the building is simply "sited" or truly "site-specific". Here, Caldarola revisits the argument by Fabio Bacchini (Bacchini, 2017), which posits that all buildings cannot be separated from their context without losing an essential part of their identity. However, she critiques this view, suggesting that only certain buildings can be considered fully site-specific - specifically, those that use their site to convey content about the historical, social, or cultural context of their production, integrating it inseparably into their "medial profile" (Caldarola, 2020). As demonstrated earlier with the example of the *Norwegian National Opera and Ballet* in Oslo, only in such cases would relocating the building compromise its ability to articulate those meanings.

A peculiar example that highlights the complex and dynamic relationship between site and artwork is the project *Relocating a Structure* by German artist Maria Eichhorn, developed for the 2022 Venice Biennale (Figures 8 and 9). The original concept of the artist, which was never realized, involved the physical removal and temporary relocation of the German Pavilion, located within the

[4] However, the sculpture, without its monumental pedestal, was later acquired and exhibited by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, in 2016, and subsequently by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 2021.

Giardini della Biennale in Sant'Elena, Venice. As the title *Relocating a Structure* suggests, the plan was to remove the Pavilion with the assistance of a team of engineers, either by moving the entire structure in one piece or meticulously dismantling it, piece by piece. In either scenario, the Pavilion would have been stored in a warehouse for the duration of the Biennale and then faithfully reinstalled at its original site afterward. This radical gesture would have significantly altered the visual and spatial dynamics within the Giardini, restoring an open, accessible space that could be used as a 'simple' public area. This reflects the Giardini's original function, which is currently restricted by the art Biennale, limiting access to much of the area outside the exhibition period or allowing it only through ticket purchase.



Figure 8: The realized version of the artwork *Relocating a Structure,* by Maria Eichhorn, which took place at the German Pavilion, at the 2022 Venice Biennale, 2022. Source: La Biennale di Venezia; the artist and VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photos by Marco Cappelletti and Jens Ziehe.

Instead, what was concretely realized from the project were a series of 'forensic' interventions on the physical structure of the German Pavilion. Eichhorn's speculative project on relocating the Pavilion was accompanied by a detailed historical and architectural analysis of the structure, which is actually composed of two buildings: the Bavarian Pavilion, built in 1909, and a Nazi-era expansion from 1938. The artist's research led to meticulous cuts and excavations in the Pavilion's architecture, revealing the intermingling of the two foundations. Layers of plaster were also removed from the walls to expose the junctions between the two buildings, revealing both the temporal and spatial-archtiectural transitions between contours, window openings, doorways, and volumetric plans. This act of

defamiliarization[5] interrogates and makes tangible, on an experiential level, the complex relationships between the artwork (in this case, the monumental German Pavilion) and its site (the Biennale Gardens), by revealing the traces - unseen but always present - of the site's historical transformations.



Figure 9: The realized version of the artwork *Relocating a Structure,* by Maria Eichhorn, which took place at the German Pavilion, at the 2022 Venice Biennale, 2022. Source: La Biennale di Venezia; the artist and VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photos by Marco Cappelletti and Jens Ziehe.

On the other hand, the idea of temporarily removing the Pavilion from its site would have made the monument's history and the identity it still embodies 'visible' from both a conceptual and emotional perspective. "The German Pavilion," Eichhorn stated, "is laden with symbolic meanings and challenges artists from various perspectives. Every attempt at deconstruction confronts this reality, which, however, also makes them amusing. Without neglecting this aspect, the German Pavilion for me is not isolated but part of a whole and involved in an interaction with the pavilions and contributions of other countries in terms of national, territorial, geopolitical, ecological, and global economic development. Why was the Biennale founded in 1895? When were the pavilions of the various countries built? Which nations have never been represented and why? Does the Biennale still reflect state policies, as is often thought, or has its representative function been diminished by a transnational art market arena expanded by capital? And then there's the issue of ownership: who owns the pavilions? Venice continues to follow the model of national pavilions because, inevitably, like embassies, the pavilions in the Giardini are owned by their respective countries (with the exception of the United States Pavilion, which belongs to the Guggenheim Foundation). And,

[5] 'Defamiliarization' is used here as defined in artistic and literary theory, notably by Viktor Shklovsky. In essence, it is an artistic technique that presents familiar elements in an unexpected or unconventional manner. This approach challenges the audience's preconceptions, prompting them to reconsider things from a new perspective by disrupting traditional perceptions and expectations.

without exception or almost, the national participations without a pavilion in the Giardini imitate this dominant structure. Is it possible to produce and perceive art more independently than what these constructs of national identity offer?" (Dziewior and Eichhorn, 2022).

2.1.5 Public art(s)

So far, I have discussed urban public space-oriented artistic production in broad and inclusive terms, exploring its development within the paradigms and evolutions of contemporary art and highlighting its key and recurring characteristics. These include its diverse approach to sites, the use of both physical and intangible materials, and its critical, collaborative, or participatory nature, as well as cases where different creative disciplines, such as architecture, intersect. In this subsection, however, I briefly outline some recent definitions of a specific form of artistic production for urban public spaces that I previously introduced in this section: *public art*.

Now, I do not intend to focus on the historical and critical analysis of its origins and development, instead referring the reader to the extensive interdisciplinary literature that has already addressed this topic from that perspective (see, for example, Lacy, 1995; Miles, 1997; Hein, 1996, 2006; Knight, 2008; Kwon, 2002; Cartiere and Willis, 2008; Cartiere and Tan, 2020; Hall, 2003; Hall and Robertson, 2001; Baldini, 2019). My aim here is to provide a framework for introducing and discussing the more recent evolutions of this art form, along with the organizational structures of its production. I will start this discussion by addressing the significant shifts that have transformed public art from its traditional association with 'statuary' and 'monumental' forms toward more dynamic, conceptual, and collaborative practices, as introduced in the introductory sections of this chapter. These practices are especially involved in interventions related to political activism, social justice, and issues concerning cultural memory and identity.

However, a comprehensive overview of the main "paradigms" of public art - in Heinich's words - is essential. So, what do we mean when we talk about 'public art'? Drawing from foundational studies on the subject, and recognizing the challenge of formally and unambiguously defining the field, in her ethnographic research on the production of public art in Italy and the United States, sociologist Silvia Mazzucotelli Salice (2015) outlines some important interpretations. First, she argues that the difficulty in defining public art stems from the fact that "the 'art world' (Becker, 1982) self-defines based on variables central to the artistic system itself—stylistic differences, techniques, etc.—and fails to place at the center of the reflection the close relationship between art, urban fabric, and community, which is instead crucial to understanding this new way of 'making art' called public art" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.37). Mazzucotelli Salice suggests a shift in perspective when defining public art, encouraging us to focus more on the adjective "public" rather than the noun "art" to highlight the social significance of this art

form. Her aim is to understand public art not merely as an extension of traditional artistic objects and practices beyond the gallery space but also as processes that deeply engage with communities and the urban environment. "Literally," Mazzucotelli Salice states, "'public art' refers to any kind of expression that uses public space as a stage (actions, performances, installations, etc.) or as a material and conceptual resource (graffiti, mural painting, interventions on pre-existing urban signs or icons, etc.)" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.38). A central theme in the sociologist's discourse is the discontinuity between traditional forms of public art, such as monuments - as I discussed in Subsection 2.1.1 - and contemporary expressions. According to philosopher Hilde Hein (1996, 2006), these newer forms of public art position the public as an active participant rather than a passive observer. The public engages directly in both the creation and interpretation of the artwork. A prominent example of this trend is the artwork *The Gates* by Christo and Jeanne-Claude (2005) in Central Park, NYC, where citizen participation transformed the installation into both a social and artistic event (Hein, 2006, in Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, pp. 39-40). As Hein argues, because the public actively contributes to the creation of the artwork, its form and meaning can no longer be predetermined as they traditionally were with monuments. Instead, they must be continuously negotiated and renegotiated over time through the various interactions between the artist and the public, among different groups within the public, and between the artist, public, and artwork, all within one or more specific sites. These sites should be understood not only in their physical and geographical dimensions but also in their sociocultural contexts, as I have previously discussed.

Here, drawing from Miwon Kwon's seminal essay *Public Art and Urban Identities* (Kwon, 1997), Mazzucotelli Salice identifies three main paradigms that describe the various phases of public art (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.44). According to the first paradigm, "*art* in *public space*", public art is defined by the placement of artworks in urban spaces with little to no interaction with the surrounding environment or local community. These works are often monumental sculptures or decorative objects that replicate museum art forms. Kwon describes this form of public art as "typically a modernist abstract sculpture placed outdoors to 'decorate' or 'enrich' urban spaces, especially plaza areas fronting federal buildings or corporate office towers" (Kwon, 1997, p.1) (e.g., Figure 10).



Figure 10: An example of the paradigm of 'art in public space': the artwork *The Great Petition,* by Susan Hewitt and Penelope Lee, installed in Melbourne, Australia, 2008. Source: City of Melbourne website.

From the late 1970s onward, public art began to engage more actively with the urban environment, intertwining with certain types of territorial regeneration efforts (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 44). This form of public art, known as "*art* as *public space*", marks the beginning of site-specific works. It is an art form that is "less object-oriented and more site-conscious", aiming for greater integration between art, architecture, and the urban landscape (e.g., Figure 11).



Figure 11: An example of the paradigm of 'art as public space': the artwork *Park Shine,* by Graham Projects, which took place at the intersection of Eastern Avenue and Ellwood Street in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, 2023. Source: Graham Projects website.

This was achieved through collaboration between artists and members of the urban managerial class - such as architects, landscape architects, city planners, urban designers, and city administrators - in designing permanent urban redevelopment projects like parks, plazas, buildings, promenades, and neighborhoods (Kwon, 1997, p. 1).

The third and final paradigm identified by Mazzucotelli Salice emerges in the 21st century, continuing the idea of art as public space. This development is represented by the concept of "*art in the* public interest", where the artwork is both a process and the result of a participatory and collaborative intervention that involves the local community in the place (or places) where the artist chooses to intervene. This practice is also referred to as "social practice" or "socially engaged art" (Kester, 2004; Finkerpearl, 2012; Cartiere and Zebracki, 2016; Simoniti, 2018, 2023). It frequently involves "temporary city-based programs focusing on social issues rather than the built environment, involving collaborations with marginalized social groups (rather than design professionals), such as the homeless, battered women, urban youths, AIDS patients, and prisoners, aiming to develop politically conscious community events or programs" (Kwon, 1997, p. 1) (e.g., Figure 12).



Figure 12: An example of the paradigm of 'art in the public interest': the artwork *The New Mechelenian,* by Krzysztof Wodiczko, which took place in Mechelen, Belgium, 2012. Source: Krzysztof Wodiczko website.

Operationally, "art in the public interest" projects bring with them the complexity of their 'publics' (Baldini, 2019). Indeed, these projects generally require complex negotiations with a wide range of stakeholders, including property owners, art and building commissions, government agencies at various levels, environmental organizations, funders, professional associations, unions, neighborhood and citizen groups, suppliers, and the makers or producers of the

artwork (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 46). However, Mazzucotelli Salice also observes that "the inclusive and participatory power of these new approaches to public art has not made the third paradigm immune to instrumentalization. In fact, several artistic interventions have managed to secure financial support from public institutions that have relied on the artist's ability to enhance degraded urban areas and revitalize peripheral neighborhoods" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 47).

Building on this framework, the sociologist argues that "an important aspect of artistic production is the transition of a work from the project development phase to its concrete realization. It is during this process that the artist interacts with other components of the social world, dialectically confronting their artistic intention with the constraints imposed by the commissioner and the public, and seeks to resolve the logistical problems that make the work's realization difficult or impossible" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.79). While in traditional art, the phases of design, realization, and conservation are distinct and independent, in the case of public art, these elements are "closely interrelated and tend to constantly overlap" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.79). This happens because, unlike traditional artworks, in contemporary art interventions directed at urban public space, the physical object of the work is significantly less relevant than the process that generated it. In many cases, the process itself coincides exactly with the artwork.

In this context, drawing on her interurban ethnographic research, Mazzucotelli Salice identifies five main organizational forms and production processes for public artworks. The "*artist's projects*" are public art funding and development programs that arise from non-governmental initiatives, generally promoted by individual artists or collectives. In the United States, these projects peaked in the 1970s, when the lack of public funding for unofficial art forced artists to self-finance. An emblematic example analyzed by the sociologist through semi-structured interviews with the involved artists is the *First Ave Project* in Seattle, started in 1978 by artists like Lewis "Buster" Simpson and Jack Mackie, who transformed the Belltown neighborhood by using scrap materials to create urban furniture. The second type proposed by Mazzucotelli Salice, "*private concessions*", includes works donated by collectors, foundations, or directly by the artists to the community. In this case, the 'public' aspect of the artwork derives not only from its placement in a space accessible to the public but also from "the nature of the donation, which activates dynamics of sharing and contributes to building a collective civic heritage" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.82). The third type, "*community programs*", involves public art projects realized through the active participation of local groups or citizen associations, which collaborate both in the commissioning and in the realization of the work. These projects often develop around urban regeneration interventions and include the involvement of local governments. Mazzucotelli Salice observes that in the North American context, "entirely self-organized community projects are scarce", whereas in Italy, these are "alongside artist-led initiatives, the main tool supporting the production of public art". Indeed, "the absence of institutional actors [in the Italian context] has fostered the consolidation of practices where either the public or the artist holds the reins"

(Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.84-85). In Chapter 3, I will provide a detailed overview of Italian policies related to the production of art for urban public spaces, with a particular focus on the city of Bologna. The fourth type is "*artistic residencies*". These represent a form of public artistic intervention where artists temporarily reside in a specific area, working on the creation of artworks or projects tailored to that context. In the United States, this model is well-established and supported by both governmental institutions and private sponsors. Mazzucotelli Salice discusses a notable example: the collaboration between photographer Peter De Lory and the Seattle Water Department, Washington, which resulted in the hiring of several artists as temporary consultants for public services. Finally, "*design team projects*" represent a collaborative approach involving artists, architects, planners, designers, and engineers who work together on large-scale infrastructure projects such as the construction of roads, bridges, and power plants. Mazzucotelli Salice argues that this approach aims to transcend traditional urban planning by encouraging close collaboration among the various stakeholders, who oversee all phases of the project from design to completion. This collaboration often seeks to mitigate public opposition to the infrastructure project from the outset. The involvement of the artist in such a team underscores how their participation "is desirable when the infrastructure project's impact on the local community is significant, and consequently, the risk of public dissent is high" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 89). The design team model exemplifies one of the most recurring features of the organization underlying many artistic practices directed at urban public space – namely, the "*hybridization*" or cross-fertilization (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p. 98) between different disciplines. Mazzucotelli Salice provides various examples to demonstrate how collaboration between disciplines is essential to the creation of public works, highlighting notable figures such as Maya Lin, who designed the *Vietnam War Memorial* (1982) in Washington, DC, while still an architecture student, as well as the *Jailhouse Garden* (1987) in Seattle, by landscape architect Martha Schwartz. Although the examples cited are from the 1980s, today, even more public art projects arise from the exchange of cultural and technological knowledge across different disciplines. Today, artists who focus their work on the 'public' must develop not only artistic skills but also technical and organizational expertise drawn from fields such as architecture, engineering, and urban planning. The integration of these multidisciplinary skills is essential for the creation of site-specific works.

It is certainly interesting to note how many artists follow unconventional training paths, driven by the desire to explore more interdisciplinary practices, breaking through the long-surpassed boundaries of traditional visual art. As Mazzucotelli Salice observes, "the perception of the differences between their artistic practice and that of others in the contemporary art world often leads the interviewed artists to transcend the boundaries of the art world. Both in the Italian and North American contexts, artists link their public art work to a desire to venture into areas at the intersection of multiple segments of the same world or between neighboring worlds, creating a blend of seemingly separate realities" (Mazzucotelli

Salice, 2015, p. 99). However, we are still far from a full professionalization of the role of the "public artist" or, to borrow from Rendell, of that of a '*critical spatial practitioner'*. Instead, what is evident is that the lack of structured educational pathways has led many artists to develop their skills through experiential learning. *'Learning by doing'* and DIY approaches have thus become key modes of professional growth, grounded in hands-on practice and field experience through numerous experiments, trials, and errors - often with little to no economic or educational support (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.102).

2.1.6 Art and activism, art and memory

Up to this point, I have discussed the intersections and influences of artistic practice with disciplines traditionally considered distant from it, particularly within the paradigm of "*art in the* public interest", where artistic production in urban public spaces intersects with social and political issues within specific sites and communities. But what happens to these practices today, as they merge with political activism, social justice themes, and issues related to memory and cultural identity? A significant body of recent interdisciplinary studies (see Mekdjian, 2018; Sandoval and Latorre, 2008; Zebracki, 2020; Zebracki and Xiao, 2021; Cartiere and Zebracki, 2016; Landau-Donnelly and Zebracki, 2023; Campos, 2023; Trione, 2022; Lehtinen, 2019; Houlton, 2022; Marchart, 2019; Duncombe, 2023; Baldini, 2023; Simoniti, 2021) has highlighted that these particular cross-fertilizations are among the most prevalent trends in the current landscape of artistic production aimed at urban public spaces.

An important contribution to the debate on the intersections between art and activism comes from social psychology, particularly through the recent ethnographic studies by sociologist Ricardo Campos (Campos, 2023). Using participant observations, semi-structured interviews, visual techniques, and collaborative activities, Campos examines the "*artivism*" practices of young artists and activists in Portugal, focusing on how they merge artistic and creative practices with civic and political engagement to address various local social causes. Campos begins by discussing the term "artivism", a recently developed (2000's) neologism that identifies the intersection of art and activism, using it to describe aesthetic and creative practices with a clear political focus (e.g., Figures 13, 14, and 15) aimed at driving social change. Artivism is a relatively new phenomenon that often emerges within local micro-political contexts, with the goal of promoting emancipatory, counter-hegemonic, and progressive social changes, particularly by giving voice to marginalized or invisible communities. It is frequently associated with a DIY ethic – as previously highlighted in Mazzucotelli Salice's work (2015) – that distances itself from traditional artistic institutions and the conventional art market (Campos, 2023, p.7).



Figure 13: An artivist action by the Bolognese collective CHEAP, which took place in 2023.The text reads "Communities are built through ~~participation~~ revolt". Photo: own work.

According to Campos, artivist interventions are characterized by several key traits. First and foremost, they aim to critique the *status quo* and existing institutions, often through a *subversive* attitude (cf. Caldarola, 2020). To this purpose, artivist interventions focus on empowering stigmatized and subordinate individuals and groups, involving them in community-driven and democratic projects that foster both artistic and political expression. The distancing from artistic institutions is another fundamental aspect of this practice, which seeks to maintain relative autonomy from economic and institutional pressures. In his discussion, Campos also highlights how, in the digital age, online tools and platforms have amplified artivism, making it accessible to a broader audience, particularly young people and minorities. This digital expansion allows them to bypass physical-geographical limitations and adult-centric hegemonic discourses (Campos, 2023, pp. 8-9).

Campos' empirical research identified five main functions attributable to artivism, or, as the sociologist puts it, to "engaged art", emerging from interviews with young artivists practicing in various Portuguese cities. Each function describes a different mode of practice through which art can contribute to social transformation and civic engagement (Campos, 2023, p.11). According to some participants, art is a powerful *tool for communicating political and social messages*. Many of the interviewees view art as a tool for mobilizing the public and drawing attention to specific causes. Artistic action, therefore, becomes a form of communication that can engage the public both rationally and emotionally, making complex issues more accessible and impactful. Other participants see art as a means of self-expression, where "*the self*" is understood as a political field (Campos, 2023, p.12). The interviewees believe that art can be a powerful *tool for exploring personal identity issues*, often connected to experiences of marginalization or

oppression. This aspect of artivism primarily manifests through artistic expressions that focus on the body and identity, and that frequently intersect with digital interventions. In these virtual contexts, Campos argues, even art created and shared on a personal level can acquire collective significance: “the artivist dimension emerges from a representation of the self as an inherently political being. In other words, the experience of oppression, being the target of injustices and normative prejudices, transforms every form of expression in the public sphere into a deeply political act. From this perspective, art can serve as a means for reflecting on the self and the world. Often, the (stigmatized) body becomes the subject of artistic production, as it is the target of oppressive normative forces” (Campos, 2023, p.13). The third function of artivist intervention identified by Campos pertains to its cathartic role. In this sense, politicized artistic action in public space becomes a *tool for actively releasing and processing emotions and addressing personal traumas*, often linked to structural experiences of social injustice, such as racism, gender discrimination, or daily struggles faced, for example, by LGBTQI+ individuals (Campos, 2023, p.14). Similar findings have emerged from the research of cultural geographer Martin Zebracki (2020). In his work, Zebracki employs queer theory to examine public art and activism practices, analyzing forms of politicized creativity that encourage critical reflection on exclusionary narratives – particularly in relation to the marginalization and “(mis)representation” of migrants. Zebracki argues that queer theory extends beyond critiquing sexual or gender norms, challenging binary categories more broadly and promoting a rethinking of social identities and power structures. He applies this perspective to the phenomenon he terms “public artivism”, highlighting how art can “queer” (Zebracki, 2020) dominant identities and foster social change that is as inclusive as possible. As highlighted in the previously discussed studies by Mazzucotelli Salice (2015), Kaddar et al. (2020), and in the writings of Kwon (2002) and Rendell (2006), art is also viewed as a *tool through which marginalized or invisible communities can gain visibility*. Interviewees noted that through artivist actions, these communities may be able to express their identity and claim a space in the public discourse. This process helps people become aware of their collective existence and build solidarity, thereby reinforcing a sense of community identity. Additionally, some participants describe artivism as a way to celebrate and make political struggles visible through acts of festivity, celebration, or play. In these instances, the power of art lies in its ability to transform public space into a site where a “carnivalization of politics” (Campos, 2023, p.17) occurs, encouraging unity and solidarity among people within a context of collective resistance. As Campos (2023, p.17) notes, “In these instances, we frequently encounter practices involving performance, such as guerrilla theatre, culture jamming, or flash mobs that engage a diverse range of participants and involve complex operations.”

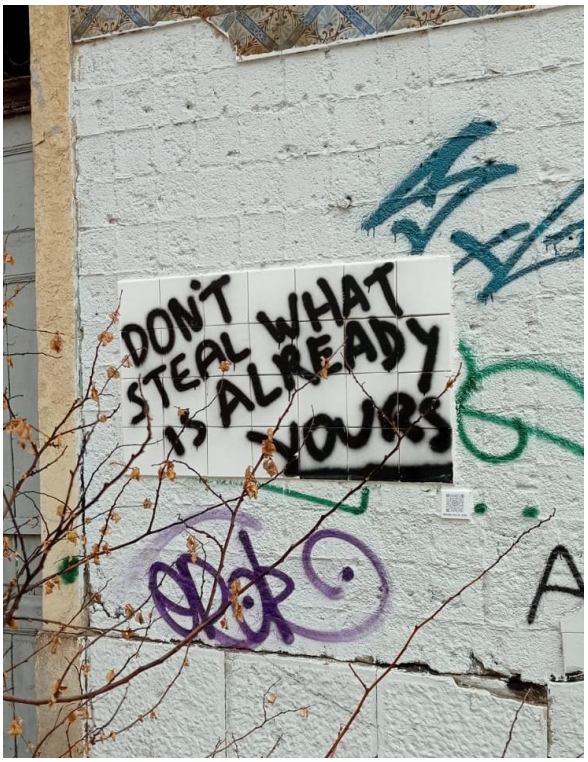


Figure 14: The artwork *The Missing Tiles of Lisbon,* by Stephan Weixler, an artivist action that took place in Lisbon, Portugal, to raise awareness about the theft of the *azulejos*, the traditional Portuguese tiles, 2023. Photo: own work.

Within this strand of research, the recent empirical study conducted by the interdisciplinary group of Marie Hoop, Volker Kirchberg, Merav Kaddar, Nir Barak, and Avner de Shalit (2022) provides a detailed examination of the politicized creative work of artists in the public spaces of four cities in Germany and Israel. The study explores the techniques used, the objectives, the varying levels of social engagement, and the different relational approaches to urban public sites employed in interventions that blend art and activism, which the scholars define as "*urban artistic interventions*" (Hoop et al., 2022). The scholars present a typology of "urban artistic interventions" based on these four fundamental criteria, derived from a qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with artists in the four cities studied. Firstly, Hoop et al. explain how, for many artists, these interventions take on very different physical and material forms, depending on factors such as the artist's inclinations, the specific objectives of the intervention, and the artist's relationship with urban space. The underlying idea is that "the medium is the message" (Hoop et al., 2022, p.3), suggesting that the choice of artistic medium significantly influences the message and the objective of the intervention itself. Furthermore, artists involved in urban interventions select techniques and strategies they deem most appropriate based on the specific goals they aim to achieve in particular city spaces. The main objectives identified by Hoop et al. include beautifying or aestheticizing the urban environment, enhancing social cohesion, encouraging critical reflection among citizens on specific urban phenomena or certain behaviors in their daily lives, and challenging the dominant

powers of local, political, cultural, or economic institutions. In some cases, these goals also lead to the creation of artworks that propose and promote new solutions and models - sometimes radical or utopian - for urban life and city development. The scholars also propose a criterion related to "sociability," referring to the degree of public participation and the artist's active engagement in the artistic intervention (Hoop et al., 2022, p.3). Interventions therefore vary in their level of social engagement, from "low sociability," where the artistic action is perceived individually and does not require direct social interaction (for example, a passerby observing a mural or sculpture), to "medium sociability," up to "high sociability," in which the intervention requires widespread participation from the local community to actually take place and 'function', transforming into a fully collective project in which the artist entirely relinquishes their creative authority. Finally, regarding the relationship between the intervention and urban space, Hoop et al. discuss how this relationship can be dual in nature. The artwork influences the urban space and is simultaneously influenced by it. The scholars identify four relational modes. In the first mode, the city serves merely as a backdrop and an inspirational stimulus for the artwork, which is simply exhibited in the urban space - following the previously mentioned logic of "*art* in *public space*" (Kwon, 1997). In this context, the city is seen as a "*space of representation*" (Hoop et al., 2022, p.4). Here, aestheticization interventions primarily aim to beautify the urban space, adding aesthetic value without necessarily addressing social or political issues. Examples include sculptures, murals, or light installations that enhance an urban area, perhaps one that is disused or undergoing redevelopment, through purely visual, chromatic, or formal enhancements. When the city is understood as a "*social space*" or a "*stage for public debate*", the intervention aims to strengthen human relations and social ties within specific urban environments, transforming the city into a forum for public discourse, which can also include political demonstrations, protests, sit-ins, and occupations (Hoop et al., 2022, p.4). In these interventions, art functions as a tool to promote social cohesion and enhance communication between different communities, as well as to disrupt daily routines and provoke reflection. Often provocative, these interventions employ techniques such as conceptual or performative art to create experiences that challenge habitual perceptions. In this context, the city can also be seen as a "*space of possibilities*", where artistic interventions serve as "*utopia experiments*" (Hoop et al., 2022, p.6), imagining and proposing new ways of living and interacting with and within the urban environment.



Figure 15: An example of an artivist action: a group of artists and students, guided by the former Israeli Museum Ido Bruno, painting a long pink stripe going from the new art school campus in Jerusalem towards the Supreme Court building, during a pro-democracy protest in March 2023. Source: Photo: Oren Alon; Haaretz.

I believe that the perspectives offered by the studies of Campos and Hoop et al. help shift the focus to a research dimension that remains underexplored in the literature: the relationship between artistic practice, urban spaces, and their transformations. Specifically, they emphasize the experiences of the artists who engage in these practices and how their experiences intersect with the unique changes occurring in the specific urban places where they live and create.

Just as artivism seeks to create new meanings through artistic-political interventions in public spaces, the issue of cultural memory - particularly the practice of re-signifying monuments - has become central to a recent debate. Although its roots extend back to studies from at least the mid-1990s, this debate focuses on who is represented in urban public spaces and how these representations either reinforce social hierarchies or promote inclusivity (see Huyssen, 2003; Cento Bull and Hansen, 2015; Deutsche, 1996; Young, 1993, 2016; Rigney, 2023; Houlton, 2022; Dwyer and Alderman, 2008; Lehtinen, 2019). Both forms of politicized artistic intervention converge in their goal of reshaping the collective understanding of society. This reformulation seeks to challenge, revise, or rethink the 'immobile' symbols of the past that populate cities.

Recently, cultural geographers Friederike Landau-Donnelly and Martin Zebracki (2023) introduced the concept of "restor(y)ing" as a critical tool for analyzing socially and politically engaged public art practices, particularly those that focus on the 'objects' of past public art, such as monuments. According to these scholars, this concept "disentangles the multiple facets of public art practices in re-making, re-claiming, and re-signifying spaces, places, times, people, and things that are restored or restoried" (Landau-Donnelly and Zebracki, 2023, p.816). They argue that artistic interventions in urban public spaces not only "restore" the existing order but also have the potential to reimagine and retell urban histories. In particular, the

concept of “æffects,” as drawn from Steven Duncombe's work (Duncombe, 2016, in Landau-Donnelly and Zebracki, 2023, p.817), emphasizes the inseparable relationship between the material effects and emotional affects produced by artistic-political action in public spaces. This concept asserts that these dimensions dynamically influence each other. Landau-Donnelly and Zebracki describe the “politics of æffects” as an analytical framework for understanding the conflicts that arise around and within public art. On the one hand, the “politics of effects” refers to the material and political consequences of public artworks, such as enhancing social inclusion or driving urban regeneration - often outcomes planned by institutions and local authorities. On the other hand, the “politics of affects” focuses on the emotional responses these works evoke among participants or viewers, including feelings of belonging or exclusion, joy or alienation (Landau-Donnelly and Zebracki, 2023, p.817). This concept becomes particularly tangible in recent activist movements in North America such as the New York-based *Decolonize This Place*, which advocates for the removal of problematic monuments, or the *Black Monuments Project*, which aims to establish new monuments that enhance the visibility of Black political and community leaders (Landau-Donnelly and Zebracki, 2023, p.818).

A similar line of critical analysis has been recently explored by memory studies researcher Ann Rigney. Rigney addresses the deactivation and reinterpretation of monuments in contexts of memory activism, exploring how public monuments can become sites of conflict during periods of intense social and political change (Rigney, 2023). The scholar introduces the concept of “*decommissioning*” of monuments as a strategy to disable the normative power of hegemonic narratives, emphasizing how this process is closely intertwined with the emergence of new individual and, especially, collective cultural memories within specific groups and communities. Rigney also focuses on the ability of these cultural symbols (both the monument and the re-signifying artistic action) to provoke strong emotional reactions and to build symbolic alliances between the person and the “monumental object” (Rigney, 2023, p.21). An interesting aspect of Rigney's analysis is the importance given to the material dimension of the monument: “a monument is a semiotic carrier of meaning indicating a desire to invoke the memory of one set of events or actors rather than another. However, monuments are not merely semiotic carriers; they also entail the often aesthetically formed materialization of meaning and, in their very materiality, they mobilize affect” (Rigney, 2023, p.21). In this regard, Rigney discusses the concept of “vibrant matter” introduced by philosopher Jane Bennett (Bennett, 2009 in Rigney, 2023) concerning the “agentic capacity” of matter (i.e., the agency of the material of an object in continuous relation with the meanings that humans attribute to it). Following this line of thought, Rigney argues that monuments are not mere semiotic vehicles but possess a significant material presence and agency that actively

participates in the construction of public and collective memory.[6] Monuments "often occupy such central positions in the cityscape which ensure that they cannot be overlooked; indeed, in many cases, traffic is forced to go around them (the Arc de Triomphe in Paris offers a case in point as does the monument to Daniel O'Connell in the center of Dublin). The material presence and aesthetic form of monuments interpellates citizens to make common cause around a particular narrative and even to organize their physical movements around the material object through which that narrative is invoked" (Rigney, 2023, p.22). However, this presence can over time become a source of conflict, where the monument, initially erected as a symbol of national pride or the celebration of historical events or figures, later becomes perceived as an object of contention and provocation.

Rigney recalls the case of the *Vendôme Column* in Paris, which, erected as a tribute to Napoleon and his military exploits, later became a target of opposition during the Paris Commune of 1871. The Communards viewed it not only as a symbol of Napoleonic militarism but also as an affirmation of the values of conquest and violence, in stark contrast to the internationalist and republican spirit embraced by the Commune. The ensuing demolition was thus an intentional act of iconoclasm, highly symbolic and meticulously planned. Similarly, the recent *Rhodes Must Fall* movement (2015), cited by the scholar alongside the historical Parisian case, opposed the statue of Cecil Rhodes at the University of Cape Town, South Africa (cf., Jethro, 2019; Houlton, 2022). The Rhodes statue was perceived by members of the movement as representative of the legacy of British colonialism and apartheid, and its removal was demanded as part of a broader effort to decolonize education and public spaces in South Africa (Rigney, 2023, p.23). "Destroying, re-inscribing, or removing monuments," Rigney argues, "helps clear the decks for something new. More importantly, creative vandalism also helps put the new on the agenda in a high-profile act of dissensus which is all the more visible because it uses existing monuments as a launching pad for the emergence of alternatives. Even if over time some of those monuments had become such a familiar part of the landscape as to be almost invisible, they can gain new vibrancy in times of contestation and become a focal point both for advocates of change and for those who would resist it. Once a formerly inert monument becomes the focal point for contestation, it starts to command new forms of attention and to inspire new actions" (Rigney, 2023, p.23).

[6] Rigney's perspective indeed aligns closely with the conception proposed by anthropologist Alfred Gell in his book *Art and Agency* (Gell, 1998). Gell argues that the material art object should be considered an entity with its own agency, rather than merely a symbol.



Figure 16: An example of monument re-signification: the artwork *Abraham Lincoln: War Veteran Projection,* by Krzysztof Wodiczko, which took place over a statue of Abraham Lincoln in Manhattan's Union Square, New York City, USA, 2012. Photo: Maria Niro; More Art.

Returning to the concept of monument "decommissioning," the scholar identifies two operational strategies to implement a "*jamming action*" on these monuments – actions that enable the reconfiguration of public memory without necessarily erasing or destroying the past (e.g., Figure 16). Indeed, Rigney observes, while the physical destruction of a monument may be a decisive operation in the short term, it also carries the risk of erasing material testimonies of, for example, past regimes, thus excluding the possibility of future historical discussions on such regimes, potentially producing forms of collective amnesia (cf., Young, 1993; Borsari and Leoni, 2024). On the contrary, the decommissioning strategies of "*re-signifying*" and "*re-framing*" allow, respectively, for the modification or addition of new meanings to the existing monument, or for the *translocation* of the monument to museum spaces, thereby stripping it of its original context and its power to influence public memory. Examples of these strategies include the *Black Lives Matter* graffiti on the Confederate monument in Charleston, South Carolina, or the artistic transformation of the Soviet Army monument in Sofia in 2011, where Soviet soldiers were repainted as characters from American pop culture (Panico, 2017). Another example is the *Memento Park* (1993) in Budapest: "it displays side by side dozens of Communist era statues as aesthetic presences that have become relics of an outdated memory culture. The very fact that so many statues are lined up together also underscores their loss of power by making each statue a specimen of a particular type rather than a vibrant object capable of commanding loyalty" (Rigney, 2023, p.24).

Another artistic strategy aligned with the concept of monument decommissioning is the creation of *counter-monuments* (cf., Young, 1993, 2016; Huyssen, 2003). The idea, first introduced by historian James E. Young, stands in opposition to traditional monumentality, often understood as static, didactic, or outdated. In contrast, counter-monuments are characterized by an ephemeral, interactive, and performative nature (Widrich, 2014). In short, their purpose is to engage the community in the process of memory-making, inviting not just contemplation but active participation in the monument itself. Young suggests that counter-monuments represent a very specific (and inherently post-modern) phenomenon that challenges the traditional monument form. According to Young, counter-monuments "contemptuously reject the traditional forms and reasons for public memorial art," placing the "burden of memory" back onto the viewer, mourner, or tourist (Young, 1993 in Houlton, 2022, p.86). A well-known and extensively studied example of a counter-monument is the *Monument Against Fascism,* created by artists Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz in Harburg, Germany, in 1986 (Figures 17 and 18).



Figure 17: The artwork *Monument Against Fascism,* by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz, which took place in Harburg, Germany, 1986. Source: Shalev-Gerz website.

This artwork consisted of a 12-meter-high square stele cladded in lead. Citizens were encouraged to inscribe their names on its surfaces, as an act of opposition to fascism. As the stele filled with inscriptions over time, it was gradually lowered into the ground until it completely disappeared in 1993.



Figure 18: The evolution over time of the artwork *Monument Against Fascism,* by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz. The image shows the progressive lowering of the column into the ground, who started in 1986 and was completed in 1993. Source: Shalev-Gerz website.

Scholar Thomas Houlton (2022) contributes to the long-standing historical and critical debate on counter-monumentality by applying psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott's theory of the "transitional object" (Winnicott, 1971) to the concept of the counter-monument. In his research, Houlton contends that a counter-monument should not be seen merely as a material artwork serving as an anti-monumental object but rather as an action or a political approach aimed at a monument considered outdated, problematic, or traumatic by a specific community (Boime, 1995, in Houlton, 2022, p.86). According to Winnicott's theory, the transitional object is a tool used by a child to manage the anxiety caused by separation from the mother, allowing the child to explore autonomy. Building on this theory, Houlton interprets the monument as a space for processing collective trauma, allowing communities to cope with loss, pain, or suffering through interaction with it – an interaction that might even include the destruction of the monument itself. A key aspect of Winnicott's theory which is of particular relevance here, involves the *use* or *function* of the transitional object. Winnicott contends that for these objects to be useful, they must survive destruction. Similarly, Houlton states that a monumental artwork can only become a positive instrument for a community if it withstands the community's usage, even if that use involves acts of vandalism: "our complex uses of monuments outside of their rituals seem to point to this excess; a sense of uncontainment that extends beyond their primary function as sites of remembrance" (Houlton, 2022, p.85). Houlton further explains this concept: "countermonuments are valuable because they expose how we can use our conventional monuments in a different way: it is perhaps our use that comes to define a monument, rather than its design. By offering itself up as a transitional object, this countermonument enacts what is only theorized around ritual monument-use: the need for the monument's community to use that object as they see fit, even in a manner that may be perceived as 'anti-social'" (Houlton, 2022, p.92). If this interaction does not take

place, the monument ceases to function as a "bridge" between internal and external reality, and its ability to help the community process trauma is lost (Houlton, 2022, p.73).

A critical perspective on the broad proliferation of politicized and activist art over the past thirty years comes from a recent contribution by cultural studies researchers Nicholas Holm and Elspeth Tilley. In their introduction to the special issue of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (2023), the two scholars pose a provocative question: despite the increasing use of art to provoke social and political change, why does it seem not to make a real difference in the world? "Questions of this sort," the two scholars state, "are increasingly inescapable as culturally minded activists and politically minded artists alike seek to use art to do things: political and social things in the world. However, much of the work carried out as part of creative activism places the emphasis on the latter term and draws its inspiration from theories of social movement formation, participatory action, and community organizing. Consequently, those working in the creative activism paradigm have tended to overlook how questions of art and aesthetics also bear upon these practices, and thereby have underthought how aesthetic aspects might complicate or contribute to the political elements of activist interventions" (Holm and Tilley, 2023, p.2). Holm and Tilley's central reflection centers on this 'paradox': although virtually every aspect of contemporary culture is infused with artistic practices that claim to be politically or socially conscious – manifesting not only in traditional arts like painting, sculpture, or theater but also in new media, popular culture, and even in everyday interfaces and objects – and despite the urgency of the problems we face today, such as climate change, social injustice, global economic crises, or the resurgence of fascist movements, these practices do not seem to result in significant and widespread changes in political actions or collective behaviors that correspond to the abundance of engaged art. According to Holm and Tilley, the lack of effectiveness in art provoking real social and political change is partly due to the implicit, now-established – yet rarely questioned – assumption that framing a protest, political action, or social intervention in an artistic form automatically enhances its effectiveness. However, as the scholars point out, it is not necessarily true that art, simply because it is 'creative,' emotionally or affectively powerful, or aesthetically engaging, is capable of achieving its intended goals. "Indeed, creative activism can go very wrong. It can harm audiences (Carello and Butler, 2014), misrepresent or appropriate causes (Zulli, 2020), and cause 'distraction from the needs of an actual movement' (Davis, 2013, p.42). Sometimes its processes can enfold the very problems—colonialism, patriarchy, ableism, racism, capitalism, or carbon footprint—it seeks to change (Barker, 2012; Boler et al., 2014; Derby, 2013; Gorski and Erakat, 2019) or descend into 'art washing' (Ruck, 2020) or 'poverty porn' (Quinn, 2015), both of which can obscure or turn away the impulse to act" (Holm and Tilley, 2023, p.7). In this context, the two scholars argue that while politically and socially engaged art holds great potential, it often risks failing in its purpose if the contexts and mechanisms

through which artistic interventions seek (and can) actually produce change are not carefully examined.

Therefore, it is not enough to create art with political goals; it is crucial to pragmatically understand how these intentions translate into concrete actions and what the practical implications of these actions are, both in the short and long term: "This does not mean though that we ought to (necessarily) abandon art as a means to change the world. Instead, we need to think harder about art and action. We need to interrogate how the potential and mechanisms of art's politics may have changed in the context of a changing world" (Holm and Tilley, 2023, p.7).

2.2 Problem statement: City's transformations in artists and artistic practicing

In light of the thematic lines that have emerged from the analysis of the literature on the relationship between art and the city, which tends to frame and address this relationship by focusing predominantly on the role of art in the dynamics of urban change, this study proposes a 'reversal' of that perspective. I have framed the research problem as follows: instead of focusing on how art contributes to the transformation of the city, I have chosen to focus on *how the transformation of the city influences the artistic production directed at it*. I believe that pursuing this objective necessarily involves a deeper exploration of the experience of artistic 'making', understood as a specific human activity oriented toward a particular context – the urban public space. Such an exploration must therefore concentrate on the formation of creative products and processes – the urban artwork – starting from the direct experience of the actors who create that art: the artists.

From an operational point of view, this reversal develops as a research line and approach, that is, as both a premise and a methodology, based on the interdisciplinary theoretical framework that I detail in Section 2.3. The fundamental premise that emerges from the theoretical framework and underpins the research problem is as follows: *the 'making and being made'*[7] *of the city is intrinsically linked to the 'making and being made' of contemporary artistic practices directed at urban space* – a conception I will refer to as *urban artistic practice*. This practice is realized not merely within the city but *through* it, and vice versa. Both the city and art are understood here as *social phenomena* (Löw, 2012) that manifest not only through material objects and artifacts but also through immaterial daily events, activities, and actions – i.e., practices – that unfold over time and are continuously spatialized. These practices interact with – and among themselves, through – what American philosopher Theodore Schatzki has defined as "material arrangements," that is, "congeries of bodies, artifacts, organisms, and things that are linked by such

[7] In Italian, I use the expression *'farsi e trasformarsi'* to describe a continuous, dual, and mutual movement between *what acts* and *what is acted upon*, between action and reaction, between becoming and shaping, between constituting and being constituted.

relations as contiguity, causality, and physical connections" (Schatzki, 2014, p.19). In this sense, daily practices and "material arrangements" are connected and organized into inseparable "bundles," such that "practices effect, use, react to, and give meaning to arrangements while arrangements induce, prefigure, and are essential to practices" (Schatzki, 2014, p.19).

In the context of my study, this conceptualization outlines a dual relationship whereby the practice of artists acts upon the city and, simultaneously, the city acts upon the practice of the artists who inhabit and work within it. I will therefore focus on exploring this 'second direction' of the relationship, while acknowledging the unity and inseparability of their dual interaction. This distinction is, it should be noted, purely heuristic. Focusing on this direction means concentrating on the interaction between the artist who produces a certain type of art and the urban context in which they operate, exploring their temporal experience of the city – namely, its transformation over time. My perspective thus considers the artist's daily experience as an integral part of the creative process, placing the artist's figure, accounts, and creations at the center of the investigation.

In this regard, as discussed in the introductory chapter, I adopt John Dewey's theory of experience, as articulated in his philosophy of art in *Art as Experience* (1934), as the theoretical baseline for both the formulation of the theoretical framework and the development of my methodological approach. According to Dewey, there is a continuity between experience in a broad sense and aesthetic experience, which is not limited to art but represents both a part and the culmination of the process of interaction over time between the organism (agent)—the "living creature"—and the surrounding environment (not necessarily artistic), understood as constantly changing: "life goes on in an environment; not merely in it but because of it, through interaction with it" (Dewey, 1934, p.19). This pragmatist and moderately naturalist perspective offer the possibility of conceiving and understanding the experiential dimensions of the artistic creation process, the experience of the fruition of that creation, the everyday experiences, and the environment of which the individual who produces and appreciate that art is a part, in continuity with one another. In other words, the daily experience of the individual-artist in and of their city is expressed both in their urban 'living' and in their urban 'creating,' with these dimensions continuously overlapping and intersecting. Furthermore, in maintaining a pragmatist perspective, I assume that the experience of 'something' precedes – or is *a priori* to – the conceptualization of that 'something'. That 'something', in this case, is the artwork, articulated by the artist through a practice understood as an "organized collection of activities" that "have to do with art" (Schatzki, 2014, p.17), through the experience of a certain context understood dynamically, that is, temporally: the city.

From an ontological point of view, the *urban art-work*[8] produced by the artist, an expression with which I will refer to the artwork in the urban space from

[8] In Italian, I use the expression *'opera-to'* to highlight the process-based and praxeological nature of the artwork, here intended together as a noun and a verb. Extending the concept, this may be better understood as 'artwork=>artistic work'; in Italian, *'opera=>operato d'arte'*.

here on, is conceived as a creative and experiential process in continuity with the daily life of the artist and those who work with them or interact with their art, through a particular context – the *urban site* – of a specific city. "We should experience artworks as continuous and connected with our whole life, for the same reason that art products are made of the same materials as the tools and objects we use in our daily lives" (Vara Sanchez, 2020, p.81). To this end, I adopt a conception of art, that is, of contemporary artistic production (that which is directed at urban public space) and of a specific aesthetic experience (that of the city), as "non-dualistic" (Vara Sanchez, 2020), which implies a "continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience" (Dewey, 1934 in Vara Sanchez, 2020, p.80). This view requires considering the art-work as "a process of entangled doing and undergoing" (Dewey, 1934 in Vara Sanchez, 2020, p.80), that is, an indissoluble intertwining of action and reaction, of creation and fruition; or, as I stated above, of 'making and being made'.

2.3 An interdisciplinary theoretical framework: The urban artistic practice (UAP)

Building on the research problem presented in Section 2.2, this section aims to provide a detailed outline of the interdisciplinary theoretical framework that informs my approach to the phenomenon under study – specifically, how the transformation of the city influences the artistic production directed toward it. This framework will also establish the methodological foundations and analytical approach necessary for conducting the research. I will further elaborate on these two aspects in Chapter 3 and in the introductory section of Chapter 4.

My approach is grounded in a diverse set of theories spanning multiple disciplines, including aesthetic philosophy and art theory, art and architectural history, urban studies, urban sociology and spatial sociology, and the sociology of art. In this context, I will introduce the notion of *urban artistic practice* (abbreviated as UAP), a key concept that will help me interpret the relationships between artistic production and the city.

What do I mean by 'urban artistic practice'? With this expression, I am not attempting to propose yet another definition for a specific form of contemporary art in urban public spaces. Instead, my aim is to suggest a unified and integrated theoretical framework. This framework is composed of three key terms, each corresponding to fundamental concepts that characterize artistic production directed at urban public spaces. These concepts are understood in a *temporal* sense – acknowledging that they evolve over time, in an *experiential* sense – relating to the subjective experiences of individuals, and a *social* sense – as both the city and artistic creation are social phenomena. In the following three subsections, I will explore each of these concepts in greater depth, discussing relevant theories and

illustrating how they interact with one another within the overall theoretical framework.

First, the urban environment (‘*urban*’): this term refers to the city itself, considered not only as a physical space but also as a social and cultural environment in constant evolution, shaped by and simultaneously shaping the practices that occur within it. According to this dynamic and transformative view, urban environments synthesize over time their unique characteristics and identities, or what can be referred to as their “intrinsic logic.” In this sense, the transformation of artistic practices – alongside other everyday human practices – reflects both social and cultural, as well as material, changes within the very context they contribute to yield and transform and are, in turn, influenced by those transformations. I elaborate on this perspective in Subsection 2.3.1, *The* ‘urban’ *artistic practice*, where I primarily discuss the theory of the “intrinsic logic of the city” introduced by the sociologist of architecture and space Martina Löw (Löw, 2012, 2013, 2009, 2016).

The second term concerns art (‘*artistic*’). Here I refer to a form of contemporary art that is conceptual, installation-based, site-specific, interactive, performative, and thus experiential. The theoretical focus here becomes the urban artwork, or *urban art-work*: its ‘being’ and nature, its salient properties, as wells as the modes of sanction and constitution of these properties through the intentional creative activity of specific actors – the artists. I discuss how this creative activity also involves the artist’s definition of particular *rules* for the art-work, which may prescribe or proscribe specific modes of production, interaction, or preservation of the art-work itself. These rules, in turn, become an integral and procedural part of the art-work. I develop these ideas in Subsection 2.3.2, *The urban* ‘artistic’ *practice*, proposing to frame urban art-works as site-specific processes of urban artistic practice. To this purpose, I primarily draw from the aesthetic theories recently developed by philosophers Elisa Caldarola (Caldarola, 2020) and Sherri Irvin (Irvin, 2022, 2013, 2005).

Finally, the practice (‘*practice*’): this term concerns the ‘*doings*’, that is, human activities and their organization as necessarily social and situated phenomena. In this context, the artistic practice – the *‘making of’ the art-work* – is understood as a (creative) process rooted in its being a social practice. In other words, it is a social practice both as an artifact and as a performance. It is also a configuration of activities that involve not only the artist, their intentions, and their actions organized in space and time, but also the ‘public(s)’ and the material and immaterial context(s) in which the art-work is created and experienced. These elements are all interconnected, existing in a relationship of continuity with one another. A context that also consists of other practices and “material arrangements” (Schatzki, 2014): “constellations” (Schatzki, 2014) that mutually act upon, shape, and are shaped by the artistic practice itself. I explore this concept in Subsection 2.3.3, *The urban artistic* ‘practice’, discussing theories related to human practice – particularly artistic practice – by Theodore Schatzki (Schatzki, 2014) and Tasos Zembylas (Zembylas, 2014).

2.3.1 The '*urban*' artistic practice

The premise on which I base my understanding of the '*urban*' environment within the broader theoretical framework of urban artistic practice is as follows: the city is not merely a collection of buildings and infrastructures, but a space that is continuously yielded and shaped through the daily and relational practices of its inhabitants (cf., Löw, 2016). But how do these practices interact with, and are in turn influenced by, the changes in the very environment upon which and through which they act? I believe that understanding urban transformation from this perspective requires an analysis that goes beyond both the mere – albeit important – observation of the 'differences' produced over time in the physical structures that make up the city's space, and its 'static' conception as a mere 'container' of human events. To do this, we need to focus our investigation on the subjective experiences of individuals who live and operate within the city.

The field of sociology of space and architecture offers important theoretical tools to explore this dimension. In this context, I will examine the "*intrinsic logic of cities*" theory (*Eigenlogik von Städten*) developed by German sociologist Martina Löw (Löw, 2012, 2013, 2009). Löw's main argument is as follows: there is a constant and reciprocal interaction – an "existential relatedness" (Löw, 2012, p.312) – between the daily social practices of people and the constitution of urban space. In other words, people act upon the city, contributing to its creation and modification; simultaneously, the city itself acts upon people, influencing and sometimes limiting their actions. This bidirectional process is what gives each city its unique specificity as an "entity of meaning" (Löw, 2012, p.304). What Löw is referring to here is the meaning that people attribute over time to both their actions and daily activities within the urban space they inhabit, as well as to urban space itself. This meaning evolves precisely through those daily actions and activities, in a process of reciprocal influence between the individual and the urban environment, ultimately forming a distinct 'city' entity.

Drawing on the theories of Bourdieu and Giddens, Löw explores what she defines as the latent and hidden (spatial) structures of a city (Löw, 2012, p.310), the "intrinsic logic of a city". By basing her theorization "a concept of culture oriented on meaning and knowledge to explain social phenomena" (Löw, 2012, p.304), she emphasizes how these underlying structures are shaped through and manifests in the everyday interactions of individuals within the urban environment. This logic is not a cognitive act but is rather based on experience, that is, practical knowledge, and it manifests in various domains such as material culture, urban planning, and social interactions. Here, the intrinsic spatial structures of a city are seen as dynamic and temporal expressions of bodily and social practices: they "find expression in many different forms and can therefore be reconstructed in various fields, for example in the speech of visitors and residents, in pictorial depictions of the city, in written sources dealing with it (from novels to travelogues), in segregation and urban planning, in events such as city festivals and parades, in objects of the material culture of the city" (Löw, 2009, p.3). The idea of a specific 'logic' of the

city, Löw observes, "does not mean that dynamic urban processes are governed by a logic in the sense of a rational law. Intrinsic logic refers praxeologically to the hidden structures of cities as locally habitualized, mostly tacit, pre-reflexive processes of meaning constitution (doxa) and their corporeal-cognitive embeddedness (habitus)" (Löw, 2009, p.3). Moreover, Löw specifies that the formation of recurring patterns of social practice within a city does not imply a congruence between an individual's personal identity and an intrinsic urban logic (Löw, 2012, p.310). Indeed, "this is not to suggest that spaces impose deterministic behavioral constraints; what we note empirically is that intrinsic logics develop in places that affect the experiential patterns of the people who live there" (Löw, 2012, p.313).

Based on three significant empirical studies, both case studies and comparative, conducted in four German cities – Darmstadt, Leipzig, Rostock, and Bremerhaven (Löw et al., 2010; Steets, 2008; Berking and Schwenk, 2011) – the sociologist identifies five key structures that define the intrinsic logic of a city. The first structure pertains to the *spatial interrelations among material objects*, such as buildings, streets, and public spaces, how they are conceived, organized, and interact with one another, as well as how these relations among urban materialities influence social dynamics. Spatial structures "involve the ordering of center or centers and periphery. They also include the demands made of architectural and artistic practice in the aesthetic discourse. At the same time, spatial structures have a technical and material component that is articulated in infrastructural systems, topology, and geology" (Löw, 2012, p.311). The second structure concerns the *historical evolution and temporalization of events* in a particular urban environment. In other words, how the city's history continuously influences its current form, and how events and materialities are experienced and interpreted by its inhabitants as 'past,' 'present,' and 'future': "walking pace in a city or symbols like the slogan 'Tempo, Tempo', which expressed a belief in progress in the Berlin of the 1920s and has remained an element of the city's self-conception to this day" (Löw, 2012, p.311). *Social structures* represent another dimension that contributes to articulating the "intrinsic logic" of the city. These include the practices and distributions that define the city's social fabric, such as economic relations, gender differences, and ethnic and religious composition. The fourth structure pertains to *political configurations,* including local government formations, power distribution, and opportunities for civic participation, as well as how issues are addressed at a local level. Finally, *affective and emotional ties* represent another important structure related to how people feel about their city, how these emotions influence their way of living in it, and how, in turn, they shape the urban atmosphere and environment. Naturally, "the dividing line between affective and other structures is conceptually blurred, since every form of structure generates an affective component in duality with practice. Thus, the practice of politics, business, or religion is also affectively embedded" (Löw, 2012, p.312). A particularly important aspect of these structures is that they are not static, rigid, or unchangeable but evolve over time through interactions between individuals, and between

individuals and the urban space. As Löw explains, "intrinsic logics are constantly being updated in rule-guided, routinized, and materially tenable action and, as the case may be, more or less perceptibly changed intrinsically (i.e., in keeping with the given city's typical manner)" (Löw, 2012, p.312). Consequently, from this perspective, the city is understood as a necessarily dynamic entity. In other words, it is not simply that cities are specific; rather, they are continuously "made specific" (Löw, 2012, p.313).[9]

Building on these theoretical standpoints, Löw argues that the intrinsic logics of a city can be empirically detected, revealing both the primary similarities and discontinuities across various "urban fields", such as politics, economics, and art. These fields can be analyzed both as individual cases and from a comparative perspective, allowing for a deeper understanding of how different cities operate and evolve within these domains. Such exploration must necessarily be based on two assumptions. The first assumption is that the entity we consider a 'city' cannot be exclusively circumscribed and identified by its administrative boundaries (although these are certainly relevant) but must also necessarily consider its *meaning boundaries*. The second assumption that follows requires, therefore, to conceive these meaning boundaries as continuously constituted and re-constituted (imagined, remembered, forgotten, retold, emphasized, acted upon, etc.) through the shared experiences of situated (i.e., urban) life among individuals (Löw, 2013) – experiences that tell us how cities "become integrated into the life world and how they condense knowledge as shared destiny in both synchronic and diachronic as well as in local, regional, national, supranational, and global terms" (Löw, 2012, p.312). It follows that these boundaries are constantly shifting with the ongoing constitution and modification of the meanings ascribed to the city, reflecting its intrinsic logic.

Although Löw only indirectly references art in her theory, artists play a significant role in this context. Through their social practices (in this case, artistic practices), which are necessarily situated, they actively interact with the city and contribute in multiple ways to defining its specific identity. Based on this premise, I believe that the theory of the "intrinsic logic of cities" offers an important theoretical foundation for exploring the practical experience of the city – which is to say, the constitution of the city's space – by the artist. In other words, this theory enables us to investigate the meaning that the artist attributes to the transformation of their city – the "limits of the city's meaning" (Löw, 2012, p.312) mentioned earlier – through their artistic production directed at it.

[9] Löw's theory may be also read against the "*spirit of the city*" theory introduced by Daniel A. Bell and Avner De Shalit (2011). Both perspectives share a common interest in the specificity and uniqueness of cities. Bell and De Shalit discuss a "spirit" that permeates the city and influences its inhabitants, shaping specific urban identities. However, while their approach tends to be essentialist, I believe that Löw's theory offers a more dynamic and structured framework, better suited – especially for the purposes of my study – to examining the reciprocal interactions between social practices, meanings, and material space. See: Bell, D., & de Shalit, A. (2011). *The spirit of cities: Why the identity of a city matters in the global age*. Princeton University Press.

Given the cultural and interpretative foundation of Löw's theory, a clear methodological direction emerges. Specifically, I argue that to understand how people perceive the changes in and of their city while experiencing them, it is essential to begin by listening to their stories, observing their actions, and immersing oneself in their daily experiences. This approach involves giving voice to the '*Other*' and actively engaging with them in their lived realities. The narratives of residents, both verbal and visual, those that emerge directly from their living conditions, material aspects, and interpretations, offer a window into what they consider unique and specific about their city, as well as into how this specificity has changed over time. In particular, the narratives of artists can reveal much about how they perceive the transformation of the city while simultaneously operating in it, through it, and upon it, in ways that "makes sense to them" (Schatzki, 2014, p.23). By perception, I refer here to a practical understanding and a reflective awareness (*'being aware of'*) of lived experiences, a crucial component of action, in line with the previously mentioned non-dualistic conception of the normativity of experience introduced by Dewey. Here, Dewey's concept of "valuation" helps to highlight how, before any conscious expression or evaluation, individuals develop practical preferences through actions, gestures, bodily attitudes, and concrete behaviors to act upon and respond to the situations they encounter (Dewey, 1939, in Gaudin, 2018, p.180). More generally, the focus on experience in its complexity "does not allow it to be reduced to 'bodies,' nor to 'expressed needs,' nor only to abstract political subjects: it does not permit one to overlook differences. On the contrary, an approach solely based on trans-individual – or macro, as it is often said – subjects (culture, society, city, 'discourse,' organization, 'local system'), whose importance cannot be overlooked, risks diverting attention from the forces and problems of individuals, and – from an ethical point of view – does not allow for the articulation of a concept of responsibility" (Andriello, 1997, p.18). To explore subjective experience, the ethnographic approach proves to be particularly effective among the various methods available. Through methods such as participant observation, interviews, and analysis of daily practices within the specific environmental circumstances in which they take place, it is possible to capture the nuances of how people live and experience their city, bearing in mind, according to the theoretical perspective I have outlined thus far, that the experience of the city is the experience of a 'something' that, while being lived and practiced, changes.[10] I will provide more specific and operational substance to these generalities later, in Chapter 3.

[10] In this regard, the pioneering studies of American urban planner Kevin Lynch, including *The Image of the City* (1960), *What Time is This Place?* (1972), and *Good City Form* (1981), continue to offer valuable insights into the methodological approaches best suited to exploring how people perceive and organize urban space as they engage with it in their daily lives. Notably, the well-known concept of the cognitive map has helped to demonstrate how residents create mental representations of their city based on how they navigate and interact with it. Although Lynch's focus was primarily about the physical form of the city, particularly the American city, his approach underscores the importance of subjective experience in shaping the perception of the urban environment, which he conceived as temporal and in constant transformation.

2.3.2 The urban '*artistic*' practice

The concept of '*artistic*' that I propose as a fundamental component of the overall theoretical framework for urban artistic practice pertains to a specific form of contemporary art characterized by the following features: it is conceptual, installation-based, site-specific, interactive, performative, public, and experiential. The focus of the theoretical discussion in this subsection, and the object it references, is the artwork created for the urban public space. As confirmed by a substantial body of literature, these characteristics repeatedly emerge and combine in various ways within this type of work. I intend to frame this kind of artwork, from a conceptual standpoint, using the term *urban art-work*. By this expression, I consider the artwork created for the urban public space as a creative and experiential process in continuity with the daily life of the artist and those who collaborate or interact with their art, *within and through* a particular context – the urban *site* – of a specific city: a certain street, a particular wall, a square, a neighborhood, but also a specific history, a set of local memories, a policy, an urban plan, a community, etc.

In keeping with the conceptualization of the city and its constitution and transformation through human social practices, both in material terms and intrinsic meaning, I propose to frame *urban art-works as site-specific creative processes of urban artistic practice*. An urban art-work is not merely a static object but a *process* – together a combination of both result and means – of constitution, or "*instantiation*" (Caldarola, 2020), that develops over time and within specific spaces. This process involves the continuous integration and practical manipulation, often regulated, of materialities (objects, materials) and immaterialities (interactions, events, ideas, concepts) by both the artist and the public. This perspective does not aim to provide an a priori or definitive definition of the complexity of artistic production in urban public spaces. Instead, I believe it can be made 'operational' (and useful) for discussing such production broadly and inclusively within a rigorous analytical and methodological approach that centers on the practical experience of individuals.

At this point, the central issue becomes what this urban art-work actually *is* – in its 'being', its 'substance', its salient properties, and the ways in which these are defined and constituted through intentional creative activity (Wharton, 2015) carried out by specific actors – the artists. To contextualize, substantiate, and articulate the arguments presented thus far, I will primarily draw on theories from aesthetic philosophy related to the ontology of contemporary works of art, particularly from the analytical branch of the discipline, as recently developed by philosophers Elisa Caldarola (Caldarola, 2020) and Sherri Irvin (Irvin, 2022, 2013, 2005). In line with these two scholars, I assume that their theoretical treatment of contemporary artworks – especially those that are conceptual, situated, interactive, and process-based – can also be applied to the majority of artistic production in urban public spaces, though without any claim to exhaustiveness.

In her recent book *Philosophy of Contemporary Art: Installations, Sites, Objects* (Caldarola, 2020), Italian philosopher Elisa Caldarola offers a significant theoretical and critical contribution to the understanding of contemporary art, particularly focusing on its production and ontology. She emphasizes three dimensions that she considers structural to this production: the *installation-based*, highly *interactive* (Caldarola, 2020, p.25), and *conceptual* nature (Caldarola, 2020, p.131) of many contemporary artworks; the complex relationship these works have with *sites* (Caldarola, 2020, p.93), including public urban sites – specifically, the 'street' (Caldarola, 2020, p.163); and the issue of their *materiality* or, conversely, immateriality, concerning what she refers to as the "*medial profile*" (Caldarola, 2020, p.48) of contemporary artworks.

In her book, Caldarola defines the installation-based nature of contemporary artworks—focusing particularly on what is known as installation art—as a set of characteristics that are both phenomenological and structural. These characteristics differentiate this type of work from other art forms, particularly sculpture and architecture, while still identifying certain points of convergence with them. For example, Caldarola discusses how observing a classical sculpture like Gian Lorenzo Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* (1622-1625) requires moving around the piece to appreciate its details as a three-dimensional physical object, similar to how one might engage with certain installation art pieces, such as Ernesto Neto's *Horizonmembranenave* (2010). However, as Caldarola notes, while traditional sculpture tends to focus on manipulating materials to convey content, installation art directly involves the audience, inviting them to interact with the artwork and, consequently, with the environment it creates (Caldarola, 2020, p.19) – in other words, to physically and mentally immerse themselves in the space the artist has shaped through the artwork. A similar consideration is made regarding the relationship with architecture, a topic I have extensively discussed in Section 2.1 with reference to the writings of Jane Rendell (2006). In this context, Caldarola emphasizes that both installation art and architecture are experienced from within and require essential direct engagement from the audience. One example discussed by the philosopher is Yayoi Kusama's *The Obliteration Room* (2002), an installation where the artist invites visitors to enter a white space and alter it by attaching colorful stickers, progressively transforming the environment. This example is compared to the *Jüdisches Museum* in Berlin, a building designed by architect Daniel Libeskind. Caldarola uses this comparison to highlight how, although Libeskind's architecture can be experienced similarly to Kusama's work – by enacting a linear spatial narrative that guides visitors through a sequence of symbolic events, space after space – installation art, unlike architecture, requires the active participation of the audience to complete the work. In other words, the intrinsic interactivity of installations – or, more broadly, of contemporary artworks that are markedly installation-based – demonstrates how these *works integrate the audience's experience into their "medial profile"* (Caldarola, 2020, p.48). That is, "artists use the audience's experiences as material for their work, manipulating them in such a way that the audience is prompted to notice certain qualities, much like a

sculptor, for example, might experiment with marble to highlight certain qualities (such as the expressive properties that emerge when sculpting a particular piece of veined marble)" (Caldarola, 2020, p.30).[11] The central argument here is that the artwork is only partially constituted – or, in Caldarola's words, "*partially instantiated*" – by the artist and those closely involved (e.g., curators, installers, etc.), and that to be completed – or "*fully instantiated*" – it must necessarily involve the audience's participation. The audience, by interacting with the artwork, manipulates its media and structure (for example, by sticking a colored sticker on a white wall, thereby completing it as 'a wall with a colored sticker'). In this context, the medium is not simply a support for the work but "a tool that the artist has manipulated to convey certain content (for example, representational content) and to emphasize certain properties of the work (for example, expressive properties)" (Caldarola, 2020, p.38), or, in other words, "any resource manipulated in some way", whether that resource is tangible or intangible (Krauss, 2010; Lopes, 2014 in Caldarola, 2020, p.40).

Another consequence of this argument is that interactive artworks, precisely because they are structured by a medial profile and not just a single medium, are composed of multiple media. To develop her thesis on the interactive nature of contemporary artworks, Caldarola draws on the definition introduced by Berys Gaut (Gaut, 2010 in Caldarola, 2020), according to which a work is *interactive* when the audience's actions *partially determine its instantiations and their properties*. In other words, the artwork is not completed until the audience interacts with it. An important point highlighted by Caldarola here is that each interaction by the audience completes the work uniquely, resulting in a *new instantiation* each time the work is experienced. Caldarola defines the installation-based and interactive nature of the work as follows: "The partial instantiations of such works are public events during which the audience experiences the environments installed by curatorial teams, while each complete instantiation is a private event in which a member of the audience perceives the installation space from within and, through their perceptions and actions (in accordance with the artist's prescriptions), realizes an experience with particular properties. It is important to note that this private event is not essentially private: it can be described to others and compared with the experiences of other audience members. In particular, the similarity and comparability between individual private experiences are suggested by the observation that all result from audience members following the same *rules set by the artist*" (Caldarola, 2020, p.31, emphasis added).

This observation by the philosopher regarding the "rules set by the artist" represents another crucial point in this discussion. Here, Caldarola refers to the theories of American philosopher Sherri Irvin, recently published in her book *Immaterial: Rules in Contemporary Art* (Irvin, 2022), where Irvin argues that many contemporary artworks are partially or entirely constituted by *rules that are "sanctioned"* (Irvin, 2022; 2005) *by the artist*, or that are "already established

[11] All quotes from Caldarola (2020), originally in Italian, have been translated by me.

within the community to which the artists belong (e.g., the community of painters in 1940s Europe, or those producing installation art in the globalized art context of the 21st century), and such that we have reason to believe they are accepted by a particular artist, unless there is evidence in their work that shows a deliberate breach of them" (Caldarola, 2020, p.43). The concept central to Irvin's theory, that of the "*artist's sanction"*, is essential for understanding the characteristics of most contemporary art production, both within and outside the so-called institutional art world and its practices, as I will demonstrate in the empirical chapters of my study. Irvin argues that while the artist's intentions play an important role, they are not sufficient to define the characteristics of the work. Instead, their "sanctions", or the practice of producing "statements that prescribe certain actions for certain subjects" (Caldarola, 2020, p.48) by the artists, or "intention that has been put into action in a specific way" (Irvin, 2005, p.324) and manifested through texts, images, actions, and more generally, publicly accessible communications, are what determine which elements of the work are to be considered salient not only in the process of interpreting and interacting with it but also in its production and preservation (Irvin, 2005, 2022). As Irvin states, "the artist's sanction may serve to fix the boundaries of her work, to determine whether a particular feature is relevant to the work's interpretation, to establish in what genre the work belongs, and, in some cases, to determine whether it, qua artwork, has a particular feature or not. Under the right conditions, the artist has a degree of special authority over these matters: through her actions and communications in particular contexts, she can stipulate certain aspects of the nature of the work. In short, through her sanction the artist can endow the work with certain features, just as she endows it with certain features by manipulating the physical materials which will ultimately be displayed to the viewer" (Irvin, 2005, p.316). In other words, Irvin argues that "sanctions" are akin to *contracts*: "Both are established by making certain statements and/or performing certain acts under appropriate conditions. [...] The artist's sanction, similarly, is established through the artist's observable actions and communications, though it may in some or even most cases be implicit [...]. To reiterate, a sanction is an outgrowth of the artist's intentional activity, but it is not identical to her particular intentions" (Irvin, 2022, p.324). Irvin illustrates her theory using, among other examples, the famous work *Untitled (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)* (1991) by Félix González-Torres (Irvin, 2022, p.10) (Figure 19). In this work, which is typically displayed in the corner of a museum room, González-Torres presents a pile of brightly wrapped candies weighing exactly 175 pounds, corresponding to the approximate weight of his partner Ross Laycock, who died of AIDS. The work invites the audience to take a candy from the pile and consume it, causing the pile to gradually diminish. This action constitutes one of the fundamental rules for interacting with the work sanctioned by González-Torres. Indeed, this seemingly simple physical act is essential to completing the work and thus forms an integral part of its structure – its medial profile – both materially, as the object 'candy' is physically removed from the pile, and immaterially, corresponding to the *rule* itself

– that the audience can (and must) take a candy.[12] Consequently, both the 'rule as such' (the one linguistically sanctioned by the artist) and the 'enacted rule' (the action derived from performing the linguistic rule) become integrated into the work as a medium, determining its intentional meaning. For example, the gradual depletion of the pile of candies represents Ross's slow loss of weight and eventual disappearance due to illness. However, Irvin clarifies that what is sanctioned by the artist *does not* determine the correct interpretation of the work; rather, it establishes the parameters within which the interpretation of the work must occur. The sanctions, therefore, play a crucial role in defining the object of interpretation, but not its final meaning, which remains a 'task' for the audience. In this sense, "artists manipulate the audience's experiences through the spaces they create and through the actions they prescribe for the audience to perform, in order to channel the audience's attention to aspects of their own experiences" (Caldarola, 2020, p.35).



Figure 19: The artwork *Untitled (Portrait of Ross in L.A.),* by Felix Gonzales-Torres, 1991. Photo: Lise Balsby; Estate of Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation.

The sanctions concern not only how the audience interacts with the work in a given context but, in many cases, also constitute the processes of the work's production and its endurance or change over time. Referring again to Irvin's example, González-Torres created specific instructions (rules) given, in this case, to the institution that acquired the work and to curators, which establish: the title of the work, the number of candies that should make up the pile, the characteristics of the candies, such as type, color, and material of the wrapper, the weight of the pile, the height of the pile, and so forth. Additionally, the artist stipulated that the pile must be periodically restored to its original state by replenishing it with candies according to the aforementioned parameters (Irvin, 2022, p.14). What, then, constitutes the work *Untitled*? Irvin's thesis suggests that the artwork, or its *nature*,

[12] In this regard, Irvin defines a work composed of a combination of tangible matter and linguistic statements—the rules defined by the artist—as a "material-rule hybrid" (Irvin, 2022, p.28).

is not exhausted by the creation of something material by the artist – a creation that, incidentally, never actually occurred, as González-Torres never personally made the candies that form the pile – but it also consists in determining the *features* of the work from a purely conceptual standpoint, communicated in the form of rules or instructions. Irvin further develops this thesis by comparing the production of installation art to that of performance art, arguing that "installation artworks centrally involve the expression of parameters for the constitution of a display; and depending on the work, the displays may (or even must) vary dramatically from one exhibition to the next. [...] The analogy between installation works and artworks for performance, such as musical compositions, is thus easy to see: the artist specifies parameters for acceptable realizations, there is considerable variation among these realizations, and aesthetically relevant aspects of the realizations are often introduced by others" (Irvin, 2013, p.242). The rules created by the artist also serve as mechanisms to modulate the degree of "control" (Irvin, 2022, p.51) that the artist intends to exercise over their work of art. This control can range from constraining the interaction with and production of the artwork to a specific 'idea' of the artwork itself (which, however, can certainly be deliberately or unintentionally violated by those who interact with it or produce it); or, at the opposite extreme, this control can be 'abdicated', accepting, for example, that the work may disappear over time. Nevertheless, Irvin notes that even the absence of rules sanctioned by the artist, in some cases, establishes a rule in itself. The *conceptual nature* of many contemporary artworks, including numerous instances of art-works directed at urban public spaces, is indeed another crucial point in this discussion, which I will revisit shortly.

To better understand the contemporary artistic production that is the focus of our interest here – namely, the urban art-work – it is essential to consider the specific *circumstances* under which one experiences works characterized by a strong installation-based and interactive nature. In this regard, Caldarola further articulates her theory by emphasizing two fundamental elements of these works: "the space within which the work is instantiated, and the very fact that we experience that space" (Caldarola, 2020, p.49). Indeed, "the space where the instantiations of an installation art work occur does not merely function as a container for objects or events relevant to the experience of the work, but is primarily what the audience is invited to notice when experiencing the work, since, as we have seen, it dissolves the traditional sense of physical distance between visual art and the audience, bringing the latter into its environments. Space, therefore, plays a role in installation art similar to that which colors and forms applied to a pictorial surface play in the experience of a painting, and different from the role played, for example, by the painting's frame" (Caldarola, 2020, p.50). Moreover, "properly experiencing the work requires following the rules for participation, which involves awareness of being present within the space where the work is instantiated – since the basic form of participation, common to all installation art works, consists of entering their space – that is, paying attention to the fact of being present within that space" (Caldarola, 2020, p.50). In this sense,

Caldarola introduces another fundamental element in the conceptualization of installation-based and interactive artworks: the *sites* and the various modes of relationship that exist between these and the artwork itself. The fact that many contemporary artworks engage with specific geographical locations, as well as their historical, social, and cultural contexts, is confirmed, as we saw in Section 2.1, by a vast body of contemporary literature, which defines these artworks as *site-specific*. Focusing on the analysis of the structure of these works, Caldarola proposes a complex *taxonomy of the relationships between the artwork and its site*, which I find particularly useful for informing an interpretive analysis of urban art-works.

First, Caldarola introduces a fundamental distinction between "*non-situated art*" and "*situated art*" (Caldarola, 2020, p.94) (Figure 21). While all artworks are necessarily placed in physical locations, and acknowledging that "the physical environment in which the work is situated impacts its perception" (Caldarola, 2020, p.94), the art defined by the philosopher as "non-situated" is that which does not rely on the specific location where it is placed to be understood or appreciated. A typical example is an easel painting, which can be displayed in various locations without its meaning being altered. Conversely, "situated art" is closely tied to the physical location, or locations, in which and for which it was created. In this case, the site is not merely a container or a background of the work of art but an active element that contributes to its definition and understanding. Caldarola clarifies the criterion for distinguishing between these two forms of art by highlighting the fundamental role that the sanctions imposed by the artist play within the relationship between artworks and sites: "aspects of the physical environment in which the work is located are relevant to its experience only insofar as they contribute to making the work perceivable in a manner that respects what is sanctioned by its author" (Caldarola, 2020, p.95). Within the relationship between the artwork and its site, the artist's sanctions primarily concern the boundaries of the work in relation to the site – specifically, where *the artist determines where the work begins and where the site ends*. It is important to emphasize that the artwork being discussed here is conceived, in its medial profile, as *an inseparable combination of physical objects and linguistic statements*, or rules, which may pertain to the possibilities of public interaction with the work (which, in this form, becomes part of the work's medial profile) as well as its production or preservation (Figure 20).

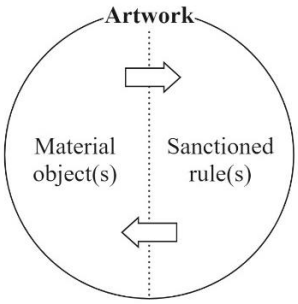


Figure 20: Diagram of the artwork as composed of physical objects and sanctioned rules in relation to each other. Illustration: own work.

According to Caldarola, it follows that a situated artwork, or the "situated instantiation" of the art work (Caldarola, 2020, p.98), is one that necessarily *integrates* the physical site into its medial profile, meaning it becomes an intrinsic part of the artwork's constitution as an art piece. In this sense, the artwork is not merely installed or located in a certain site (or sites); rather, it exists or takes place through the site (or sites) itself, as defined by the artist: "For all artworks that are physical objects or events and for all instantiations of artworks, the physical environment in which they are placed is relevant to their experience only to the extent that it contributes to making their vehicles perceivable in a manner that respects what is sanctioned by their author" (Caldarola, 2020, p.98); these are the "non-situated" artworks. In contrast, in "situated" artworks, "the vehicles of some artworks and some instantiations of artworks are constituted by certain physical objects or events plus the physical environments in which they are installed or take place" (Caldarola, 2020, p.98).

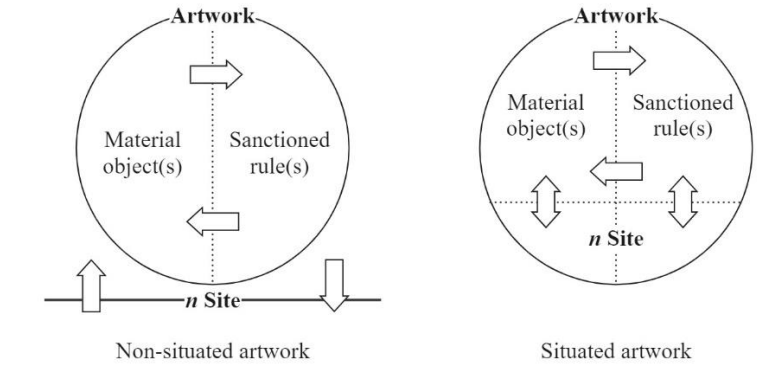


Figure 21: Diagram of the artwork in its two types: on the left, the *non-situated artwork*, merely placed in a certain site (or sites); on the right, the *situated artwork*, where the site (or sites) is an integral part of the artwork. '*n*' indicates the possible number of sites with which the artwork can have a relationship in these two scenarios. Illustration: own work.

Caldarola then proposes a further distinction by introducing the concept of the artwork's *context* and two ways in which we can refer to it in the analysis of an artwork (Figure 22). The first way concerns the physical "*Context"*, which refers to its placement environment(s) (Caldarola, 2020, p.99). The second way pertains to a broader sense of context, which is immaterial and represented by the historical period, culture, society, and political dynamics in which the artwork exists and/or was produced. Caldarola identifies this historical, cultural, and social context(s) with the expression *"Context**" (Caldarola, 2020, p.99). An artwork, whether situated or non-situated, can have various relationships with both types of contexts. However, the philosopher notes that "in numerous cases [...] the experience of the artwork within its Context* is not possible, either because the work has been transported to a place belonging to a culture and society different from those in which it was produced, or because, as is obvious for many works of art, time has passed since the creation of the work, and we can say that the culture and society in which it was born no longer exist" (Caldarola, 2020, p.99). In these cases, the author argues that "it is, however, incorrect to think that if a work is placed outside its Context*, it loses some essential property as an artwork. [...] One thing [...] is the damage inflicted on a situated artwork by transporting it to a different site from the one in which it was situated, while another thing is the impact of the change of Context* on our experience of the artwork" (Caldarola, 2020, p.100). Accordingly, it is important to distinguish between what the artwork means in its own rights, which depends on the "expressive intentions of its creator" (Caldarola, 2020, p.100), and what the artwork means to its audience: "the first type of meaning does not change over time, but the second does, because it depends on the audience. Those who experience a work of art today that comes from a different historical and cultural context are faced with an object whose intrinsic meaning has not changed" (Caldarola, 2020, p.101).

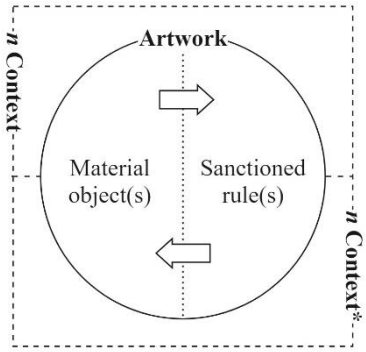


Figure 22: Diagram of the artwork and its placement: within the physical context (or physical contexts), labeled as *n Context*; and within the historical, cultural, and social context (or historical, cultural, and social contexts), labeled as *n Context*. '*n'* indicates the possible number of contexts with which the artwork can have a relationship in these two scenarios. Illustration: own work.

Another central aspect of the relationship between an artwork (and its instantiations), whether situated or non-situated, and both its physical Context and its broader historical, cultural, and social Context* is its ability to *refer to* them, or "to address" them. By "to address", Caldarola means to 'engage with' or, in other words, *to reference something* – in this case, the Context or Context* (Caldarola, 2020, p.102) (Figure 23). Once again, whether a work refers to specific Contexts or Context* depends on what has been sanctioned by the artist for that particular work – specifically, whether the work is "designed to articulate content or emphasize properties that refer to" that Context or Context* (Caldarola, 2020, p.102). The artist's intention for the work to refer to or not refer to Contexts or Context* greatly influences its instantiation process, that is, how the artwork is constituted and exists. The relational combinations produced by the mode of reference are at least eight. Both non-situated and situated artworks can either be: Contexts-only referring artworks, Context*-only referring artworks, or simultaneously both Contexts and Context* referring artworks.

A practical example that illustrates this relational mode is the installation work *Until* (2018) by artist Nick Cave, as analyzed in detail by Caldarola. The artwork "initially appears to resemble an elaborate Christmas decoration similar to those seen in luxury department stores: there are more than fifteen kilometers of crystal beads, millions of plastic beads, twenty-four chandeliers, and thousands of ceramic figurines of animals and fruits distributed throughout the gallery space where it is installed. However, upon closer inspection of the installation's elements, one notices that they also include bullets and images of firearms and lawn jockeys (small statues of Black men in jockey attire that some traditionally place in front yards in the United States, which is now recognized as a manifestation of racist attitudes). The work is situated, as it incorporates a room in the exhibition space where it is instantiated into its medial profile. However, the work does not refer to its site, as it does not articulate content that addresses the exhibition spaces, the specific cities where it is instantiated, etc. (notably, *Until* has been instantiated both in the United States and Australia). Instead, the work refers to the issues of violent crimes perpetrated with firearms and police violence against Black people in contemporary America. Therefore, it is a work that refers to its Context*" (Caldarola, 2020, p.105).

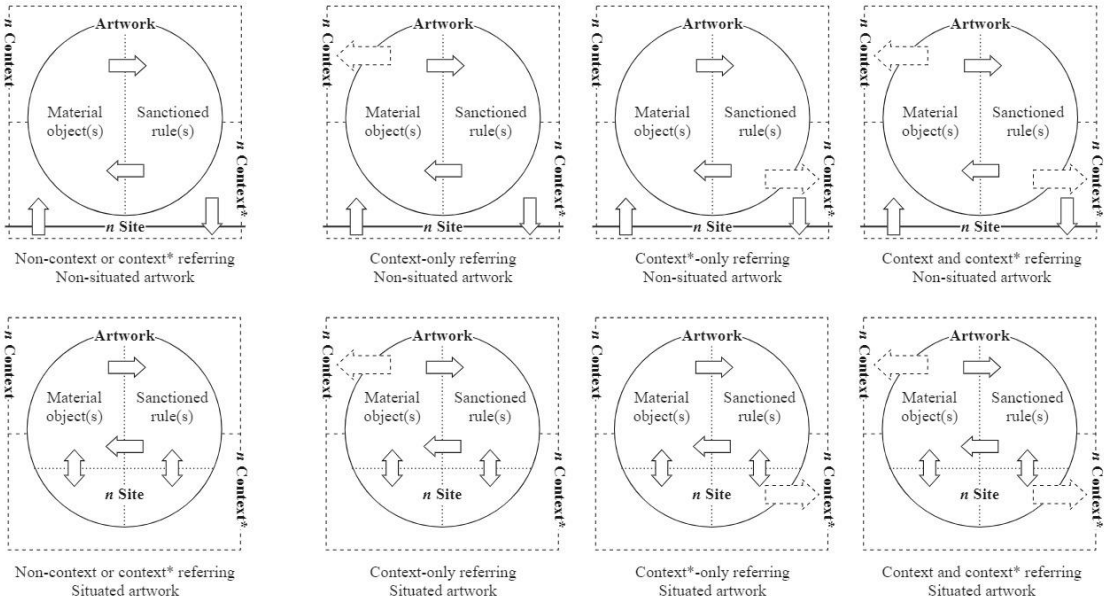


Figure 23: Diagram of the various types of relationships through *reference*, that the artwork – whether non-situated (top left corner) or situated (bottom left corner) – can establish with both the physical context (or physical contexts) *n Context,* and with the historical, cultural, and social context (or historical, cultural, and social contexts) *n Context**. Illustration: own work.

For situated artworks (or situated instantiations) only, Caldarola proposes a differentiation in their relationship of "being situated with respect to a certain site" (Caldarola, 2020, p.105), resulting in two subtypes of situated artworks: "*weakly situated*" artworks and "*strongly situated*" artworks (Figure 24). The main difference between the two lies in the quality of their way of '*appropriating*' the site' (or sites). According to Caldarola, this quality of 'appropriating' the site depends on what is established by the artist for the work – how the artist uses and manipulates the site as a *resource* (i.e., as a medium) to articulate the artwork, both in practice and through the rules they establish. In this sense, a situated work is weakly situated if it merely "*includes*" the site (or sites) in its medial profile. In such a relationship of inclusion, the site is conceived as a kind of *extension* of the work. These are "works (which are physical objects or events) and instantiations of works constituted by (a) an artifact created by an artist in a form of art (for example, sculpture, painting, performance, architecture) *plus* (b) the site itself: the medial profile of such works and instantiations of works includes both the medium (or medial profile) of the artifact and the site" (Caldarola, 2020, p.105). Conversely, a situated work is strongly situated if it fully and inseparably "*integrates*" the site (or sites) into its medial profile. In this case, the site represents an integral part of the work, in both its material and immaterial components. These works are "constituted by an artifact created by an artist in a form of art in such a way that a certain site is incorporated into the medium or medial profile of the artifact: here too, the medial profile of the work or the instantiation of the work includes the site, but this site is inextricably linked to the medium or medial profile of the artifact, unlike in the first case" (Caldarola, 2020, p.105). Both weakly and strongly situated works can

maintain multiple relationships of referring to (or not referring to) both Contexts and Context*.

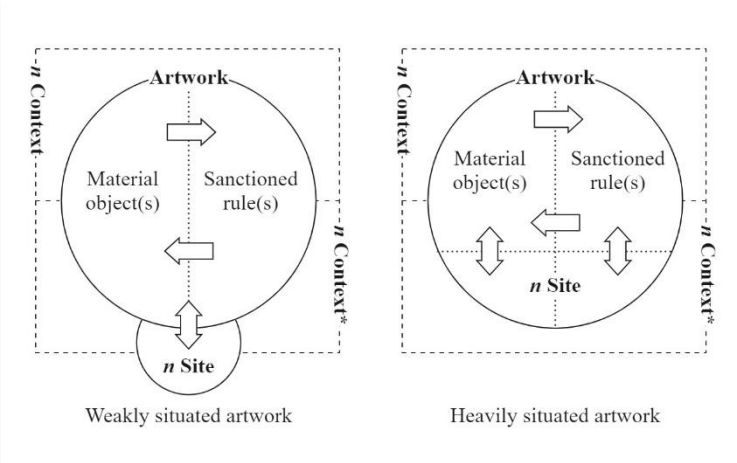


Figure 24: Diagram of the situated artwork in its two subtypes: on the left, the *weakly situated artwork*, where the site (or sites) is merely *included* in the artwork; on the right, the *heavily situated artwork*, where the site (or sites) is fully *integrated* into the artwork. Both subtypes can establish various relationships through reference with both the physical context (or physical contexts) and the historical, cultural, and social context (or historical, cultural, and social contexts). Illustration: own work.

Finally, the philosopher introduces a further distinction regarding the *relational nature of the site* (or sites) with which a situated artwork may interact as described thus far. To this end, Caldarola distinguishes between "*generic sites*" and "*particular sites*" (Caldarola, 2020, p.109). Generic sites are those that share common characteristics, such that moving the artwork between these sites does not imply a change in the artwork's identity. Conversely, particular sites are those that do not share any common characteristics, and therefore, moving the artwork between these sites necessarily implies a change in the artwork's identity. A clarification regarding the relocation of a situated artwork between different sites is necessary: if this relocation has not been sanctioned by the artist – meaning it violates the rules established by the artist regarding the boundaries of the artwork relative to the site – then the artwork is considered damaged. On the other hand, if such relocation has been sanctioned by the artist, it does not harm the artwork and, in some cases, it may even result in a new, additional instantiation of the same situated artwork.

At this point, it is essential to briefly revisit a salient aspect of the works described thus far, an aspect that is similarly addressed by both Caldarola and Irvin and that constitutes the true backbone of both theories: the *conceptual nature* of many contemporary artworks. The idea underlying the 'conceptual' nature of a particular artwork relates to its ability to overturn the traditional relationship between object and meaning. In traditional art, the physical object has often been conceived as the true core of the work, serving as the bearer of the artist's aesthetic qualities and technical mastery. In conceptual art, however, the material artifact is configured as a mere means to convey an idea or concept, or to stimulate a reflection

that surpasses the artifact itself. One of the key notions in this context is the *dematerialization* of the art object. This notion, originally developed by Lucy Lippard and John Chandler in 1968, among many other authors, describes the tendency of conceptual artists to reduce the importance of the physical object, instead emphasizing the idea or concept. According to this notion, the physical object is not entirely removed, but rather, its role within the '*system of the artwork*' is redefined. For instance, if we consider the rules sanctioned by the artist for producing an instantiation of a certain work, these might take the form of a simple paper document with text or images printed or drawn on it. In this sense, the work exists as a written or visual statement on a sheet of paper, making the *idea of* the artwork its central focus. I have already addressed this issue in Section 2.1 with reference to the relevant literature. Here, however, I will focus on two important "mechanisms" (Caldarola, 2020, p.144) used by many conceptual artworks to convey ideas: "*exemplification*" (Caldarola, 2020, p.147) and "*prop-oriented make-believe*" (Caldarola, 2020, p.150).

The concept of *exemplification* is central when considering how contemporary artists use physical objects in conceptual art. This notion, notably addressed by Nelson Goodman (Goodman, 1976), refers to the mechanism by which an object can represent or illustrate an idea or concept that goes beyond the object itself. In this context, the physical object is selected by the artist not for its aesthetic value but for its capacity and "functional role" (Irvin, 2022, p.25) to symbolize a specific concept. In conceptual art, the object assumes a semiotic function: it becomes a sign that points to a particular meaning. This transformation of the object into a sign is one of the distinctive aspects of conceptual art, which, through the work, requires the viewer to go beyond its materiality to grasp the idea it references. Moreover, the material object can exemplify multiple ideas simultaneously, creating a *network of meanings* that intersect and inform each other, making the work particularly dense from an interpretative standpoint.

Regarding *prop-oriented make-believe*, this concept identifies a mechanism by which, through the material object that constitutes an integral part of the artwork, the artist enacts a specific '*game of fiction'* (i.e., of *make-believe*) governed by specific rules that philosopher Kendall Walton defined "principles of generation" (Walton 1990 in Caldarola, 2020, p.151): "Through a principle of generation, what is given in a certain game of make-believe (the content of the game) is connected to what is given in the real world (the prop or support of the game). The general scheme of a principle of generation can be expressed as follows: *[According to the fiction F] if and only if G*; where G stands for what is physically given and F stands for what is given in the fiction" (Caldarola, 2020, p.151, emphasis added). In this sense, objects can be used to create fictions or narratives within an artistic context determined by the artist. The objects thus become *props* in a sort of 'conceptual play,' where the audience is invited to participate in a game of make-believe, imagining scenarios or meanings that go beyond the material object itself. One of the most well-known examples of this mechanism can be found in Michael Craig-Martin's conceptual artwork *An Oak Tree* (1973) (Caldarola, 2020, p.152) (Figure

25): the work "presents us with a glass of water on a glass shelf supported by two metal brackets, two hundred and fifty-three centimeters from the ground, and a text affixed to the wall below the shelf, lower down, to the left. In the text, Craig-Martin claims to have transformed 'a glass of water into a fully grown oak tree without altering the contingent properties of the glass of water'—an act of transubstantiation. [...] The text also provides us with a discourse that allows us to correctly identify the vehicle of the work: to appreciate the work, we must not only pay attention to the glass on the shelf but also to the fact that the artist claims that these objects are the product of an act through which the artist has transformed 'a glass of water into a fully grown oak tree without altering the contingent properties of the glass of water'" (Caldarola, 2020, pp.152-153). Simply put, people engaging with the make-believe game sanctioned by Craig-Martin are essentially required to imagine that the shelf, the glass of water, and the text in front of them *are*, in fact, an oak tree.



Figure 25: The artwork *An Oak Tree,* by Michael Craig-Martin, 1973. Source: Michael Craig-Martin website.

2.3.3 The urban artistic '*practice*'

Let us now turn to the concept of '*practice*'. Following the theoretical framework developed thus far, we have seen how the city is constituted and transformed through social practices, which are themselves shaped by the city's formation and transformation. Over time and across different spaces, what is shaped is the artistic practice directed at public space - referred to here as *urban artistic practice* - which produces the *urban art-work*, understood as a *site-specific process*. In this context, if we want to explore how the transformation of the city influences the artist's work and their creation of urban art-work, it is not enough to define the artwork solely in ontological terms, i.e., what it *is* and (of) how it is 'made'. We must also ask: what is a 'practice,' and specifically, what is an 'artistic practice'?

And what, in relation to the creation - or the *instantiation* - of urban art-works, is meant by 'process'? To address these questions, I draw on theories related to practice, developed within the field of the sociology of art by Theodore Schatzki (Schatzki, 1996, 2014), Tasos Zembylas (Zembylas, 2014a, 2014b), and Howard Becker, Robert R. Faulkner, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (Becker et al., 2006).

In the opening of his edited volume *Artistic Practices: Social Interactions and Cultural Dynamics* (2014), art sociologist Tasos Zembylas explores the concept of practice by critiquing action theory and the theory of practice, highlighting a significant gap in sociological research concerning both knowledge and the arts: the lack of attention given to the processes of artistic creation and "the emergence of the new" (Zembylas, 2014a, p.7). Zembylas observes that despite the importance attributed to action theory by sociologists such as Max Weber, specific research on artistic creation and creative action has been limited, with a few pioneering exceptions, such as the studies of Howard Becker (Becker, 1998; Becker et al., 2006). More recent work by scholars like Sophia Krzys Acord and Tia DeNora (Acord and DeNora, 2008), Yael Kreplak (Kreplak, 2018), and Eduardo de La Fuente (de La Fuente, 2007, 2010, 2019) also contributes to easing this gap. To this purpose, Zembylas raises a twofold issue. On the one hand, there is a tendency toward a certain "devaluation of the body as a bearer of agency. This epistemological misconception is clearly expressed in Descartes' distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, where he denied the body any intelligence" (Zembylas, 2014a, p.2). Although this tendency has been counterbalanced by well-known philosophical developments - most notably phenomenology and pragmatism, which emphasize the primacy of human action as an "intelligible vehicle" (Zembylas, 2014b, p.2) - the near-total absence of discourse on creative processes remains a key issue. Zembylas attributes this lack of discourse to the nature of the processes themselves: "practitioners in the arts and sciences work hard on a theoretical or experimental level and ultimately present their results without mentioning the creative process – either because creative practices appear self-evident to them, or because their awareness focused on the contents but not on the *modus operandi* of their accomplishments. Their cognitive and practical skills, which are essential for their creative practice, thereby remain in the dark, outside of public awareness and appreciation" (Zembylas, 2014b, p.1). Zembylas, therefore, proposes starting from a "practical understanding" (Zembylas, 2014b, p.3) of practice theory and of the concept of practice itself, using them as a lens for analyzing creative processes in art and the formation of its productions, as well as illuminating the aesthetic dimension of '*making*'. The "practical understanding" he advocates involves a comprehension of practice that begins with the direct exploration not only – or, at least, not exclusively – of the 'worlds' of the practitioner, but also of their *actions* and the *products* of those actions – what practitioners '*do*' and what has '*been done*' by them – which are generated and take place within those very 'worlds.' It is important to note that these worlds are necessarily interrelated with culture and politics (Zembylas, 2014b, p.2) and thus

are never autonomous. From an operational standpoint, the ethnographic nature of such a program is easy to see. Applied to my area of interest – i.e., artistic production – the starting point must be, as Kreplak suggests, "the assumption that *if we go to see what artists are doing, then we will know what they* really *do*" (Kreplak, 2018, p.142).

So, what do we mean by 'practice'? Drawing on Wittgenstein's writings as an alternative to Bourdieu's conception of practice, Zembylas defines practices as "configurations of cohesive activities that establish coordinated and collaborative relationships among the members of a community" (Zembylas, 2014b, p.1). Unlike Bourdieu, Wittgenstein does not attribute an ethical dimension to practice (which he defines as 'praxis'), but instead views it as a *'set of activities'* that stem not from the individual mind, their "inner world" (Zembylas, 2014a, p.8), but from a community. The key point here is the essential contextualization of human 'doings' and its "linkage to comprehensive social formations" (Zembylas, 2014a, p.11). In this sense, Zembylas highlights a crucial aspect of practice, namely the *locus* from which it originates and through which it constitutes itself as such: "the social life of practitioners, their accomplishments, which as a rule includes institutional settings. Consequently, practices are implicitly and intrinsically tied to living communities situated in time and space" (Zembylas, 2014b, p.1). Following this line of thought, Zembylas identifies five fundamental characteristics of practice, namely: (1) the fact that even though practices are carried out by individuals, as social phenomena they do not possess a genuinely individual character. However, individuals are *carriers of practices* as they physically and linguistically enact particular patterns of actions, thereby performing a practice; (2) that the origin of practice does not lie within the individual's mind, but it develops based on one or more specific *communities of practices*, or "constellations of practices" (Schatzki, 2014), in the sense that the individual and their "practical knowing" (Zembylas, 2014a) necessarily develop within an environment composed of and shaped by other social practices that mutually interact and influence each another; (3) that the understanding of any practice must take into account other social phenomena such as knowledge, power, language, and institutions; (4) the fact that, as a result of understanding practice as a social phenomenon, the understanding of the concept of 'knowledge' also changes, being redefined as "produced and practically anchored through social interactions and negotiations" (Zembylas, 2014b, p.11); and (5) that the meaning of practical 'doings' emerges in interactions between individuals, and between individuals and their environment, which take place precisely through those same 'doings'. The unfolding of this 'doings' in space and time is therefore observable and public (Zembylas, 2014b, p.11).

The conceptualization of practice developed by Zembylas shares much with the definition of practice elaborated by philosopher Theodore Schatzki. Schatzki characterizes practices as a *set of doings and sayings* "performed by different people" (Schatzki, 2014, p.17). In his view, practices "weave together bodily actions as well as linguistic utterances, gestures, etc., and subsume what in other theoretical traditions are labeled as behavior and discourse. What unites these

actions and linguistic utterances into sets of doings and sayings are the specific tasks and projects that impose orderings of the actions," which are temporally and spatially organized into a "nexus of doings and sayings" (Schatzki, 1996 in Buch and Elkjaer, 2020, p.6). Schatzki argues that this organization is governed by three mechanisms. These involve: (1) the understanding of what, in particular, it *makes sense* for people to 'do' and 'say' in relation to a specific (environmental) situation and at a certain time; (2) the necessary presence of rules, principles, precepts, and instructions that circumscribe the formation of connections between 'doings' and 'sayings,' and the change of these rules over time through a process of disruption, which determines new rules – for example, a score that needs to be followed to perform a certain musical piece, or the case of improvisation (Schatzki, 2014, p.25); and finally (3) the so-called "teleoaffective structures", which guide and structure people's 'doings' and 'sayings' towards specific goals, projects, tasks, purposes, emotions, sensations, and moods that emerge from performing those 'doings' and 'sayings' (Schatzki, 1996, p.89). Everyday instances of the type of practices Schatzki refers to include "cooking practices, religious practices, transportation practices," and, of course, artistic practices (Schatzki, 2014, p.18). Besides sharing with Zembylas the idea that practice has a necessarily social basis, another important point in Schatzki's perspective is the notion that the nature of practice "rests on something that cannot be fully put into words" (Schatzki, 2014, p.18), which implies, in addition to a limit on verbalization, the presence of *tacit practical knowledge* (cf., Polanyi, 1967), according to which the individual, within a certain environment, directs their attention (both mental and bodily) towards the object of their action. However, the course of that action, that is, *how* the action is performed in a certain circumstance, remains unconscious, residing instead in the very action performed in the here and now by the individual. In this sense, rather than dwelling on the potentially unproductive examination of mental states, the analysis of practical action should focus on the *conditions* surrounding that action, namely, the circumstances under which the person decided to 'do' or 'say' that particular thing.

The conception of human action as a contextualized social practice resonates with the theory of the constitution of urban space as fundamentally linked to social practices, as elaborated by Martina Löw (Löw, 2012, 2016) and previously discussed in Subsection 2.3.1, as well as with Dewey's concept of experience, in that "experience is the result, the sign, and the reward of that interaction of organism and environment which, when it is carried to the full, is a transformation of interaction into participation and communication" (Dewey, 1987 [1934] in Zembylas, 2014b, p.12). This perspective, when applied to the context of artistic creation, helps to move beyond the 'mentalist' impasse, which confines creativity solely to the mind of the individual artist and views the creative process as singular and linear. Instead, in this line of thought, artistic creation is understood as an "*incremental* process. It is *open*, that is, not planned in the narrower sense, because genuine artistic achievement only acquires its final shape in the creation process […] At the same time, it is a *fragile* process, because it depends on many 'internal,'

thus inherent aspects and imponderables as well as on 'external' structures and resources" (Zembylas, 2014a, p.14).

A similar view of art as practice has also been supported by philosopher Richard Shusterman in his pragmatist aesthetics. Shusterman also defines "art as a social and cultural practice, where the notion of practice is briefly understood as follows. A practice is a complex of interconnected activities that require learned skills and knowledge and aim at the achievement of goods internal to the practice […] although external goods […] like derivative products may also be desired. Since they are directed towards internal goods, practices are governed by internal motives and criteria of achievement that are largely unarticulated as they are embedded in the history of the practice, in its achievements or traditional masterpieces. […] this strategy of defining art as practice does not only concern works of art. In fact, since the notion of practice emphasizes human activity while also recognizing the products it creates, defining art as a complex practice is useful for understanding not only the objects of art but also its subjects who engage in this practice, the producers and consumers of works of art" (Shusterman, 2022, p.71-72).

In this same sense, building on a social conception of artistic practice, Becker et al. (2006) in their edited volume *Art from Start to Finish* explored the issue of artistic creation by focusing on the artwork itself and its *creation process* – "the artwork in process, what creators do in concert with others" (Becker et al., 2006). There are two points in their analysis that I would like to emphasize here. The first aligns with, but also diverges in form (though not in intent), from what both Zembylas and Schatzki have argued: that the artwork is the result of a series of interactions among members of a particular "artworld" (Becker, 1982). I will not elaborate further on this point; it is enough to note that, in relation to the discourse on the artwork, this approach helps recontextualize and, in a sense, 'rebalance' the position advocated by Irvin (2005, 2022) and Caldarola (2020), discussed in Subsection 2.3.2, which attributes primary authority to the artist in determining what constitutes the artwork. The "artist's sanction" thus occurs within the artist's work which is fundamentally social.[13] The second point concerns the temporal production of the artwork, which involves "in its most primitive form of no more than the recognition that nothing happens all at once but rather occurs in a series of steps" (Becker et al., 2006, p.4). However, for Becker et al., this observation does not imply that the creative process follows a linear path from mental conception to material realization. Instead, it opens the door to understanding the artwork itself as a process, prompting questions such as "*What is the artwork?*" and "*When and where does the artwork begin?*" and "*When and where does the artwork end?*" To

[13] It is worth noting that neither Irvin nor Caldarola in any way deny this condition. Irvin, for instance, develops her theory of the "artist's sanction" and the rules for participation, production, and preservation of the artwork by referencing John Searle's (1995) concept of "status function", which relates to the social definition of a certain artifact as the product of a specific community, according to the conventions, practices, or agreements of that same community (See Irvin, 2022, p.22).

this end, Becker et al. introduce the concept of "career" to highlight the contingent nature of the artwork: "there are typical sequences of movement and change in the story of any artwork, and these sequences provide, analytically, a series of points at which you can see forking paths, ways the work might have gone differently, if someone or something had behaved differently. That if is a crucial point of study, telling us where the interactions of artist and others provided alternatives to what in the end actually did happen, making clear the contingent, rather than inevitable, character of the artwork we're trying to understand" (Becker et al., 2006, p.5).

I believe this perspective can be particularly relevant when considered alongside the theories of Irvin and Caldarola and, from a predominantly empirical standpoint, when directly engaged in exploring the artist's experience. In line with Zembylas, I also believe that such theoretical frame provides a promising methodological and analytical lens for examining artistic 'doings' and their products and processes which are generated within a specific context understood dynamically, that is, temporally, as it "overcomes the binary opposition of the individual and society and makes it possible to analyze sets of activities and discourses on micro and macro levels simultaneously" (Zembylas, 2014b, p.2).

Chapter 3 – The methodological approach

"Long field observations and conversations with people are a good way to learn. We get into the habit of walking around the city just for the pleasure of discovering places, hearing voices, seeing people in action. We end up engaging ourselves and feeling our emotions. We learn to enter into the feelings of others, *to see a place as it must appear to them*. In dialog we begin to discover *the collective images of what is possible.*" (Lynch, 1980, in Andriello, 1997, p.87, emphasis added)

"Any problem of scientific inquiry that does not grow out of actual (or 'practical') social conditions is factitious; it is arbitrarily set by the inquirer." (Dewey 1938, p. 499)

Introduction and chapter outline

In this chapter, I delineate the methodological structuring of this research. The account I present both fleshes out and builds on the personal and epistemological standpoints, as well as on the literature review and the theoretical groundwork set forth in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. What I do here is discussing extensively the conceptual assumptions, methods, techniques, and procedures used, all of which constitute foundational components of the entire study. By 'foundational' I refer to the particular research attitude that has been *both shaped by and has shaped* the investigation of the 'making' of the urban art-work and its relationship to the artist's experience of change of a specific city, Bologna. In the following pages, I precisely focus on this 'shaping and being shaped' of my research attitude. To do this, I provide a reflexive account of how I structured and conducted this empirical study.

Operationally speaking, here is a very brief outline of what this work entailed: I used a qualitative case study design and conducted fourteen months of fieldwork in Bologna, from November 2022 to January 2024, involving artists members of local urban artistic practices (hereafter, UAPs). The study was guided by a methodological triangulation of in-depth semi-structured interviews, direct observations, visual ethnography, stimulated recall interviews, and visuo-textual documentary materials, in order to combine and collect dialogues with observations, texts with images, temporal processes with materialities.

I recurred to methods that focused on recovering and exploring *rich fragments*, traces, sequences, or rather snapshots, of instances of urban artistic production in Bologna. These fragments represent the unit of analysis, exemplified here by the work of three case studies, i.e., three Bolognese UAPs, along with seven of their urban art-works. Now, as I have discussed in Chapter 2, my understanding of urban art-works is that of *site-specific creative processes of urban artistic practice.* Thus, the creative practicing of those artists who participated to this study related not only to (the experience of) the city of Bologna as a whole, but especially

to some of its spatio-physical and socially constructed settings in flux. Or simply put, to specific *public urban sites* at different scales that transformed over time: windows with painted inscriptions layered on top of each other, walls that are demolished, repainted, or rebuilt, indoor spaces that change function or destination, streets with a new train line running through them, squares whose public use is restricted, new housing blocks, gentrified neighborhoods, and so forth.

Although the overall inquiry focused on the individual's experience, my interest was not to identify their psychological motivations. Instead, I wanted to explore the relationship between the creative processes that constitute urban art-works, and the experience of a specific changing urban context: the same context were these creative processes take place. To this purpose, I aimed to probe and understand the structural, organizational, social, and most of all *practical* dynamics of this peculiar artistic practicing and its products *as* processes, *assuming that it is within the latter that the artist's experience of the city's change manifests and is articulated.* And indeed, the core of this inquiry was precisely *how* this experience is expressed, interpreted, and organized by the artist in and through the constitution, or *instantiation,* of their urban art-works.

In recognizing significant (yet not exclusive) authority for artists to *sanction* (Irvin, 2022) the ways and meanings of their art practicing, I decided to tackle this aspect by engaging in an intersubjective communication aimed at encouraging expression and giving voice to those involved, also by relying on the visuals and artifacts generated by the artists. My intention was to explore what was not immediately apparent, which I believed would emerge by tentatively re-constructing and learning *with* the participants about the narratives, the circumstances, the processes, the issues, the methods, the ideas, the choices, and the meanings of their artistic production in relation to their concrete experience of the city. Put simply, this meant talking with the artist about what they were doing, how they were doing it, and attending to it with them, being in it with them. In my view, such an approach is essential to understanding relevant human practices. To this purpose, I assumed that both the visual material and the textual material represented, for all intents and purposes, equally valid data functional to the elicitation, explication, knowledge, and understanding of the studied phenomenon. This entailed a process of *orientation-connection* of meanings (Lynch, 1960) operated reflexively by both the participant (the artist) and the researcher (myself), between what was done and what was experienced, between what was said and what was seen, as well as between actions and objects, words and images, places and time(s), altogether.

This in-depth ethnographic exploration of the three UAPs sits within a larger sub-investigation conducted through interviews with a sample of 12 local art practices organized as collectives or as autonomous practitioners, for a total of 17 artists. This was done with the aim of highlighting the different contexts of interaction in which the case studies were embedded and practiced daily: a local *art community of practices* (Irvin, 2022), or put differently, their 'urban art worlds.'

So, a reader may ask themselves: what is the use of providing such a detailed and exhaustive report of methodological standings and procedures? This question is well received. As I argue in the following pages, with this chapter I attempt to tease out new modes of interdisciplinary research in the growing, but still scarce, landscape of urban[14] inquiries of the 'making of' art directed at the public spaces of the city and its relation to the transformation of the latter. My suggestion here is that we begin by paying particular attention to the experience of those who make this art, exemplified by the figure of the 'artist', and to how they make it, that is to say, to the meaning they ascribe to their actions and the creative processes (hereafter, CPs) *in and as* their art-works. In this sense, my insistence on contextualization and reflexive accounts of the (often erratic) interaction between operational choices of methods, procedures of inquiry, and the object of study is, I contend, well justified. As such, my own experience in structuring and carrying out such an investigation, however limited, could represent a methodological contribution to the current scarcity of established, rigorous, and systematic methodological approaches committed to the (interdisciplinary) study of this peculiar art form.

This chapter consists of two main sections. In the first section, Section 3.1, I outline the methodological design of the study, focusing on the rationale for choosing an empirical qualitative case study research approach, the theories and criteria through which I informed and constructed this methodological framework, as well as how I selected the empirical context – the city of Bologna – and the large sample of local UAPs. I then frame the empirical core of the research, namely three specific case studies of UAP in Bologna, explaining my rationale for their selection and my overall approach. This section will serve as a reference for the presentation of the analytical material and the results of its examination in the empirical chapters.

Then, in the second section, Section 3.2, I discuss in detail the methodological approach that guided the fieldwork, namely the triangulation of two main qualitative research methods: *semi-structured interviews* and *visual ethnography*. I present and reflect on the theories that informed this particular approach and the choice of methods, explaining how these were operationalized. To this purpose, I outline the protocols developed for conducting fieldwork, also paying attention to the process of data storing. I also reflect on both the techniques for selecting the sample of participants – the artists members of local UAPs – and on ethical considerations, such as my attitude towards field access, the relationship with study participants, and data management.

3.1 Case study design: outline and procedures

The design outlined for this research is that of a *case study*. My understanding of the qualitative case study approach aligns with that of Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and Creswell (2007). In the context of a qualitative inquiry such

[14] 'Urban,' in the sense that here we are talking about this particular form of contemporary art as an urban phenomenon.

as this one, what qualifies as case study is the "in-depth description and analysis of a *bounded system,*" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.40, emphasis added) that is, the *unit of analysis*, "a single entity, […] around which there are boundaries." (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.40) In a case study research "the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes." (Creswell, 2007, p.73, as cited in Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.43)

Given the impossibility of separating the variables of the studied phenomenon from their context (Yin, 2008) – in this case, the artist and their art-work from the social and spatial environment of Bologna – I deemed this qualitative approach appropriate for the outlined objectives. Nevertheless, it was necessary to establish clear boundaries to define the basic units of analysis. Essentially, this involved 'fencing in': the empirical setting (the context), and the practices of a particular social group (the variables of the phenomenon).

Consequently, I have structured the overall case study design into two nested levels: (1) a *macro-case study* level (hereinafter referred to as *MCS*), focusing on the city of Bologna; and (2) a *micro-case study* level (hereinafter referred to as *mCS)*, examining a specific local sample of UAPs.

While the core of my research question revolved around the connections and interactions between these two levels - representing the *topic* of investigation - my ethnographic focus rested on individuals and their personal experience of *those* connections and interactions *through their doings* – understood as both organizational processes and their products – which are, indeed, inherently bound to a specific context and immersed in a particular culture.

To this end, the true 'empirical heart' of the research, or else, the *sub-unit* of analysis, involves the in-depth study of three specific UAPs identified within the larger sample of UAPs at the mCS level (see Figure 26).

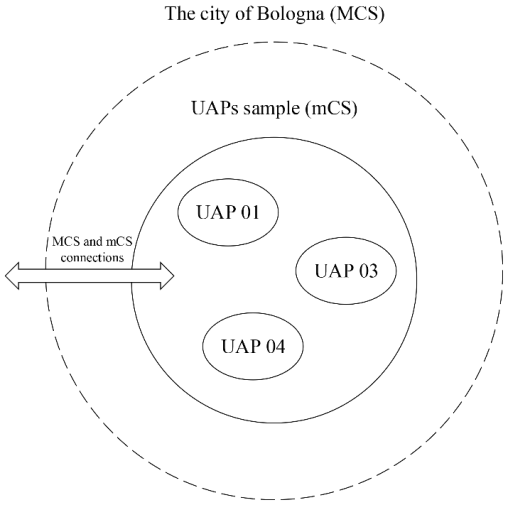


Figure 26: Diagram of the case study design. Illustration: own work.

In Subsections 3.1.1, 3.1.2, and 3.1.3 I will provide a detailed description of the two levels, respectively MCS and mCS, discussing my rationale and the inclusion-exclusion criteria applied to structure them.

3.1.1 Macro-case study (MCS) and its criteria: the city of Bologna

The choice of Bologna as a macro-case study was based on a combination of theoretical considerations and practical, 'opportunistic' motivations.

Regarding the latter, my decision to select Bologna over other cities was primarily influenced by my familiarity with this context at the start of this study. Additionally, its close proximity to my place of residence at that time played a significant role in my decision. This pre-existing familiarity, built upon prior experiential knowledge of the city, facilitated access to crucial sources and individuals that might have otherwise been limited by practical constraints, including time limitations. These reasons are not to be overlooked, as they allowed me to quickly establish and expand the sample of UAPs, immerse myself in the ethnographic context, and gain a comprehensive understanding of the city through the stories and lives of its residents. Furthermore, as an early career researcher, the facilitated access to the field and the opportunity to establish a network of contacts in a specific location also resulted in potential economic savings. While this might be considered a utilitarian and somewhat personal aspect, it is one that warrants consideration, particularly when financial constraints need to be addressed. After all, the researcher themselves serve as the primary *instrument* in and of their own research. Another practical aspect worth mentioning is the geographical alignment between the institution where I conducted my research, namely the University of Bologna, and the city itself. This alignment confirmed the choice in terms of feasibility concerning access to the field and resources – again, an important consideration for the development of an investigation of this kind.

On a different yet equally significant note, my decision to concentrate on the Bolognese context stemmed from its 'particular' characteristics in relation to the subject of my study, namely the artistic practicing and its relationship with the city and its change over time. When I say 'particular,' I am referring to elements and features of the city that I believed would better illustrate my research topic, as they were more *manifest* (though not necessarily representative) there compared to other contexts. One significant aspect that influenced my decision was the city's "cultural history" (Trasforini, 2003, p.18), its diverse array of local cultural enterprises, institutional establishments, and grassroots creative initiatives. Many of these creative entities were actively engaged in activities aimed at the urban environment, including issues related to urban development and regeneration – issues more directly related 'change'. Art and "art worlds" have always been "one of the most relevant components" of the city (Trasforini, 2003, p.18). Historically, Bologna has played a central role in Italy's art and culture scene, particularly during the period from the 1970s to the 1990s. To this day, the city still shows "a prominent

disposition towards the arts and culture", with the latter being locally "grounded in the independent arts and mixed media productions" (Morea & Sabatini, 2023, p.3). Consequently, the city has attracted numerous artists and artistic collectives over time. Additionally, the local policies for art in urban public spaces, championed by the Emilia-Romagna Region and the Municipality of Bologna over the past two decades, emerged as peculiar examples of intervention in urban space, within the Italian context. More recently, these policies have become integral to the establishment of what is known as the "creative city" (Yencken, 1988), a concept in urban economics that focuses on "culture-led urban policies aimed at rebranding the city image, boosting tourism, and developing an art- and creative-based urban economy" (Morea & Sabatini, 2023, p.1). These policies have influenced various mechanisms and strategies of urban planning and development, resulting in diverse socio-spatial implications, ranging from varied benefits to instances of inequality, reproducing trends observed in many Western cities. Within this framework, Bologna can be regarded as a 'creative city'. In 2019, the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor (CCCM)[15] assigned Bologna a score of 34.2, among 30 other European "large" (in terms of population) creative cities.

Alongside these institutional efforts, there emerge a substrate of autonomous initiatives of artistic intervention in urban public spaces led by artists, art collectives, and curators, often characterized by a spirit of public participation and political activism (Morea & Sabatini, 2023), which are more prevalent in Italian cities. The underlying reasons for this particularity should be understood within the specific legislative context of Italy concerning policies and institutional programs directed at art within urban public spaces. I will address this point in more detail later in this section. Given that my study focused on this particular *milieu* (see Subsection 3.1.2) Bologna emerged as an apt choice for a macro-case study.

Besides 'scientific' and 'opportunistic' motivations, and in addition to considerations regarding demographics, geography, and morphology, my choice was theoretically informed by the theory of the "*intrinsic logic of the city*," as outlined by Martina Löw (2012), a concept which I elaborated upon in Chapter 2. I would like to briefly recapitulate it here. Löw's theory explores the latent structures of a city, locally habitualized processes of meaning construction, and their material embodiment. These structures influence diverse facets of social practice – including the UAP, or the artistic practicing of a particular social group, artists – such as identity, emotions, attitudes, and cognition, all while perpetuating a specific, *distinctive logic* that is intrinsic to each city. Accordingly, this perspective advocates for the analysis of cities as distinct symbolic sub-worlds that incite action in characteristic ways through implicit meaning ascription. Löw's framework enables the examination of enduring collective action patterns over time, that can be distilled to fundamental shared meaning relationships, particularly those related to the inherent qualities of a specific locale. In other words, over time, not only certain

[15] Source: https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/cultural-creative-cities monitor/cities/bologna?year=2019 (last accessed: February 18, 2024).

social practices (and discourses, see Barbehön et al. (2016) – the 'doings' and 'sayings') are shaped by specific spatial contexts, but also these spatial contexts are shaped by those very social practices. Therefore, to recur to my research question, it can be argued that *what* is experienced and addressed as change and transformation in a city cannot be understood independently of *how* it is experienced and addressed (to paraphrase Barbehön et al., 2016, p.240). Accordingly, this dimension—that of distinctiveness, of specificity—cannot be deduced *a priori*, but rather emerges from an *internal* perspective, that of the city's own discourse, and from the experiences of individuals living and practicing within it. Löw distinguishes the process yielding a city's logic into five structures encompassing: (1) the spatial interrelations of material objects within a city; (2) the historical evolution of a city and the temporalization of its events and material manifestations (its development); (3) the dynamics governing the formation of a city's social fabric; (4) the political configurations of a city and its avenues for public participation; and (5) the affective bonds, encompassing emotions and feelings, connecting individuals to a city (Löw, 2012).

In this context, at the outset my understanding of Bologna was that of as a city possessing a distinct, inherent 'intrinsic logic' that is primarily cultural and yielded by "paths and relatively recognizable and recurrent modes of social organization of meaning" (Trasforini, 2003, p.17). This approach to understanding the city and its evolution is echoed in the work of Maria Antonietta Trasforini (2003), particularly in her sociological study *Art in the City*, which stands among the still limited investigations into 'urban public art worlds'. Trasforini describes Bologna as a city that "appears to embody a complex 'urban culture', with multiple layers, often resistant and opaque, marked by contradictions, in a state of perpetual flux yet exhibiting elements of immobility" (Trasforini, 2003, p.17). According to this interpretation, Trasforini argues that "change/innovation and simultaneous immobility seem to suggest a first key to interpretation and can be traced back to a guiding metaphor to grasp the changes of a city as changes in cultures" (Trasforini, 2003, p.17).

It is essential to acknowledge here that the exploratory and interpretative study of the continuities and discontinuities of the specific 'logic' or 'distinctiveness' of a city can be valid and applicable to *any* city. This applies both to a single case study and to investigations aimed at comparing different urban settings. This perspective aligns with the viewpoint advocated by Barbehön et al. (2016, p.241), who argue that "for interpretive urban research, there are no cities that are more or less suitable for the study of urban distinctiveness". Therefore, the choice of a particular city (or multiple cities) is arbitrary.

Lastly, I understood the empirical boundaries of the macro-case study 'Bologna' in terms of both its territorial boundaries: the metropolitan area – the *Città Metropolitana di Bologna* – and its municipality – the *Comune di Bologna*. The maps Figure 27 and Figure 28 show the boundaries of these two administrative entities, as well as those of the main neighborhoods and areas of the city.

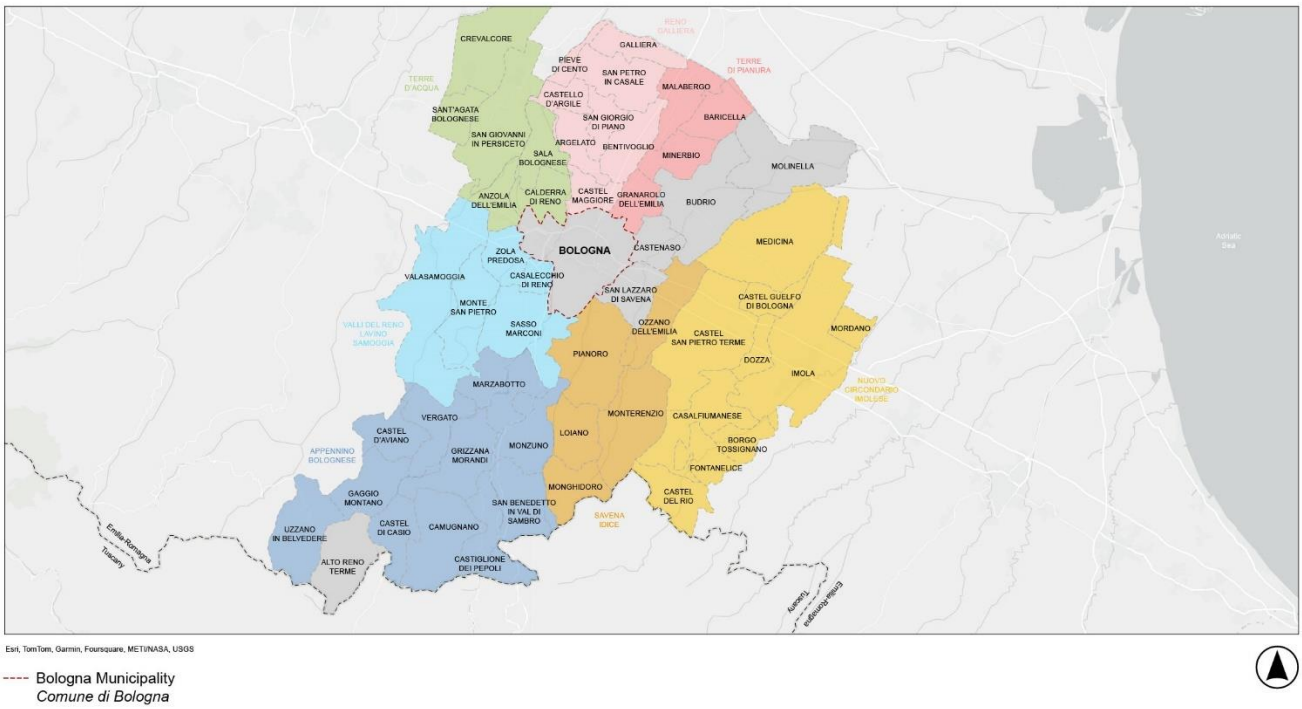


Figure 27: Territorial boundaries. Boundary of the Metropolitan City of Bologna within the eastern portion of the Emilia-Romagna Regional territory, with the borders of the Municipality of Bologna highlighted with a red dotted line. Illustration: own work.

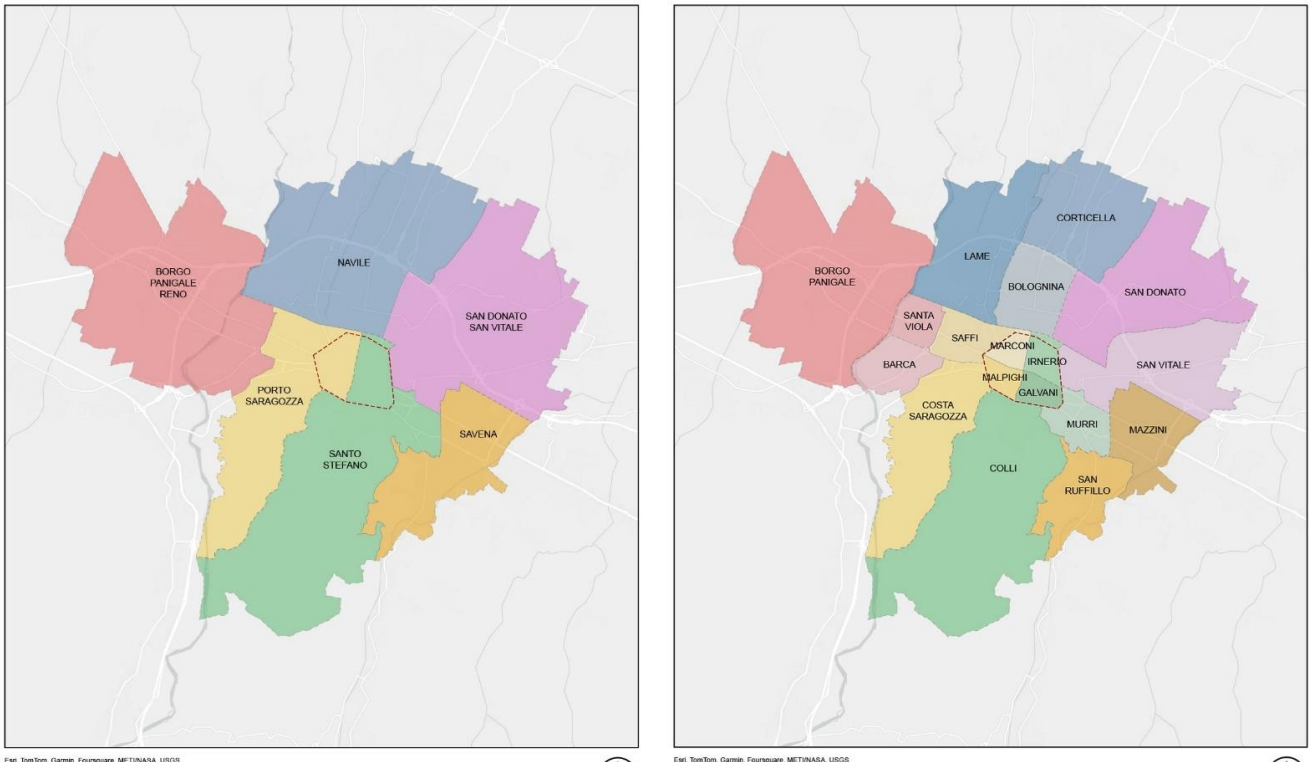


Figure 28: Territorial boundaries of the Municipality of Bologna. On the left, delineations of Bologna's neighborhoods, and on the right, their respective urban areas, including the historic center, highlighted with a red dotted line. Illustration: own work.

Bologna, Italy

Bologna, the capital city (*capoluogo*) of the Emilia-Romagna region, ranks as the seventh most populous city in Italy, counting approximately 400,000 inhabitants within the city itself (392,444 according to ISTAT, 2022). Its metropolitan area accommodates over a million residents, including a diverse population hailing from various nationalities, with foreign residents accounting for 15.8% of the total population (Emilia-Romagna Region data, 2021). Additionally, approximately 100,000 estimated city users traverse Bologna daily, encompassing students, commuters, tourists, and others.

Bologna is frequently acknowledged, both domestically and internationally, as a city characterized by pluralism, cosmopolitanism, intellectual vigor, social engagement, creativity, and a strong cultural identity. It is recognized for its left-leaning political orientation, as well as for having been an historical epicenter of multiple political conflicts (Morea & Sabatini, 2023, p.5). The city has also stood as a pivotal transit nexus within Italy for centuries. From an economic standpoint, Bologna diverges from the conventions of a global city (Sassen, 2013) and relies more on national economy and on unique forms of local entrepreneurship based on cooperatives and manufacturing companies.

With an historical lineage tracing back to the 1st millennium BC, Bologna has consistently served as a prominent European urban center, wielding influence in the realms of finance, culture, intellect, and more recently – yet, to a lesser degree – of tourism. In this regard, the University – which has consistently attracted the highest number of students nationwide[16] – has long served as a central identity character for the city, a role it has held since its founding in 1088. Since 1971, the University of Bologna has been home to Italy's first university course dedicated to arts study and research, known as *DAMS* - Dance, Arts, Music, and Performing Arts. Additionally, the Academy of Fine Arts (*ABABO – Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna*), established in 1710, operates in the city. This institution provides one of the few and longstanding (to my knowledge) courses in Italian education dedicated to the study and creation of public urban artistic interventions. It builds upon pioneering experiences of public art within the Italian context, such as *Accademia in Stazione* (The Academy at the Train Station) from 1997 to 2005. This initiative took place at the Bologna central train station and constituted a public participatory, and workshop-oriented artwork organized by professors and artists from the ABABO. Within this context, in 2008, the *GAP* project - *Giovani per l'Arte Pubblica* (Youth for Public Art) was also initiated in Bologna. This project emerged from a collaboration between the now-defunct independent gallery NEON and the Youth Artists Promotion Office (*Ufficio Promozione Giovani Artisti*) of the Municipality of Bologna, with the aim of providing tools to young artists interested

[16] Source: https://www.istat.it/it/files/2016/11/Studenti-e-bacini-universitari.pdf (last accessed: February 18, 2024).

in engaging with the design and execution of public art interventions (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.78).

The city maintains one of Italy's most extensive and well preserved historic urban cores, known as the *Centro Storico*. During the post-war era, Bologna experienced dynamic urban growth, both within its historic center and outward into the suburbs, reaching its zenith in the early 1970s. This expansion was facilitated by a series of municipal social and urban plans and policies. These initiatives not only shaped the city's morphological, economic, and institutional development but also established a distinct and enduring tradition of preserving and revitalizing its urban and architectural heritage, particularly within the historic center. This tradition continues to significantly influence the collective cultural identity of the city and its residents. Notable instances of this commitment to both preservation and urban renewal include the 1969 '*Piano del Centro Storico*' (Historic Center Plan) and the subsequent 1973 '*Piano di Edilizia Economica e Popolare*' (Social Housing Plan), often abbreviated as PEEP. These plans, devised under the stewardship of architect and planner Pierluigi Cervellati, entailed the conservative restoration of substantial segments of the historic center. Simultaneously, they promoted social, cultural, and residential repurposing – a divergence from the prevailing trends of that era, which often leaned towards the "museification" of historic areas in various Italian cities (Cederna, 1982). Over time, these specific planning policies aimed at the preservation of the historical built heritage have reinforced Bologna's identity as a *historic city*.[17] Moreover, they have underscored its significance within a broader and more complex national and international discourse – that of Cultural Heritage – related to this kind of urban environment.

In recent times, the most significant socio-spatial phenomena that are transforming the city of Bologna can be attributed to widespread global urban processes, often interconnected, which have impacted not only large cities but also medium and small ones undergoing post-industrialization processes, as extensively discussed in the literature.

[17] The term 'historic city' here encompass: (1) a presently inhabited human settlement; (2) with contemporary development shaped by a physically constructed morphology recognizable as originating in the past, whether recent or remote; and (3) identified, wholly or partly, as 'historic' by a specific social group based on their cultural expressions. This definition aligns with UNESCO's concept of the "historic urban landscape" (10 November 2011), including the glossary of definitions in Section I, paragraph 9.

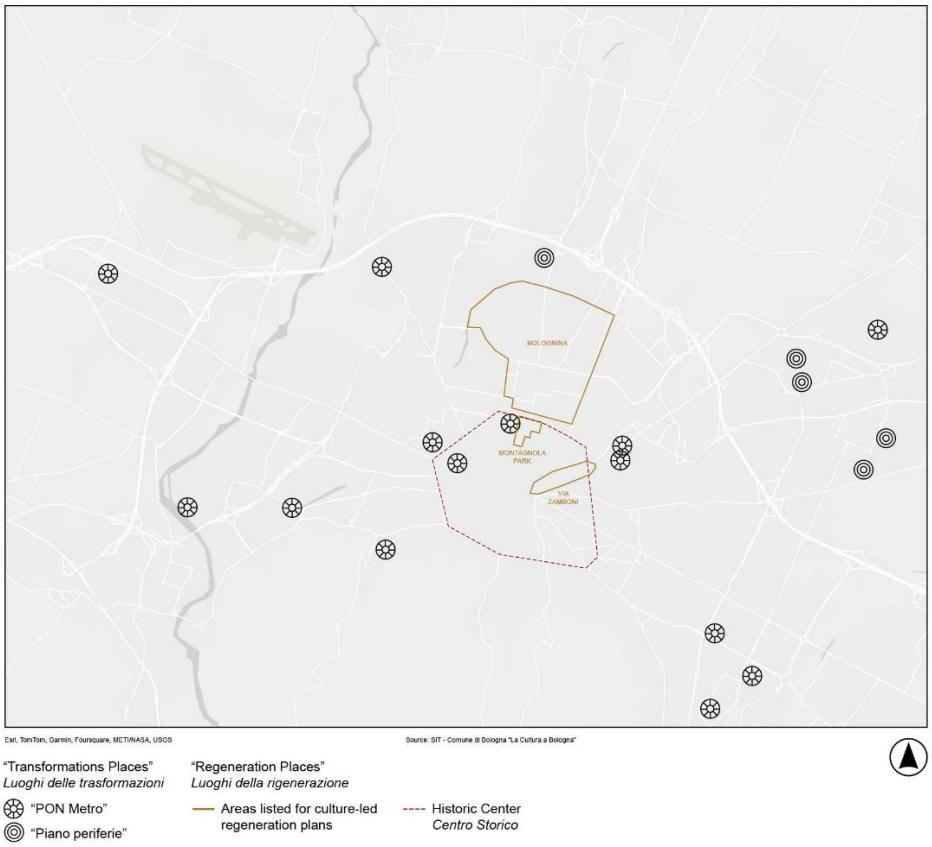


Figure 29: Map illustrating the significant culture-based urban transformation plans, referred to as "Transformations Places," and areas undergoing culture-led regeneration, known as "Regeneration Places," as planned by the Municipality of Bologna through the *Urban Innovation Plan* (2016-2021). The historic center is highlighted with a red dotted line. Illustration: own work, based on cartography provided by the Municipality of Bologna – Culture Sector, specifically sourced from the "Map of Cultural Density."

These encompass *gentrification* (Semi, 2015), the rise of *overtourism* leading to *touristification* (Fiore, 2022), *studentification* (Miessner, 2021; Annunziata, 2014; Smith, 2005), as well as various forms of urban regeneration such as *food regeneration* (Frixa, 2021) and the aforementioned *culture-led regeneration*, prominently featuring *city branding* initiatives (Bonazzi, 2020). Additionally, a significant *housing crisis* has emerged, impacting numerous Italian cities, driven by the substantial conversion of long-term rental properties into short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb) predominantly catering to the tourism sector (Fiore, 2022) (e.g., Figure 30). All of these phenomena have surfaced in the participants' accounts, which I will examine in detail in the empirical chapters (see Chapter 4).



Figure 30: On the left-hand side, activists are setting up tents in Piazza Maggiore, in front of Palazzo D'Accursio, the seat of the Municipality of Bologna, protesting against the spread of short-term rentals aimed at tourists in Bologna and the housing crisis (September 2019). On the right-hand side, one of the numerous anti-Airbnb graffiti on the walls of Bologna. The text reads "Die Airbnb!". Source: Zero Bologna.

Policies for art in urban public spaces: Italy, the RER, and Bologna

As previously mentioned, it is worth to briefly revisit here some of the various policies, institutional programs and guidelines that Italy, the Emilia-Romagna Region (RER), and the city of Bologna have put in place to support art in urban public spaces.

While regulations for funding artworks in urban public spaces have been in place for over sixty years, their implementation has been limited. It is only in recent times that some municipal administrations have begun to recognize art's potential for social change, extending beyond its traditional roles in celebration, monumentality, and urban embellishment (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.50).

In Italy, the introduction of art into urban public spaces traces back to the early experiments in mural art during the 1930s. These initiatives sought to move away from the individualistic aesthetics of the early twentieth-century avant-gardes. Instead, they proposed an art form that went beyond traditional venues like galleries and museums (the so-called 'white boxes'), aiming to serve a collective and educational purpose – a stance described as "militant" by Mario Sironi in the 1933 manifesto on mural painting. The movement was significantly shaped by the fascist regime's use of art to propagate its ideology through murals on newly constructed building facades (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.62). It was only during the post-war reconstruction years that the national government, along with other influential figures in Italian culture,[18] established a law regarding the creation of artworks for the decoration of public buildings. This legislation, known as Law 717 of 1949, is commonly referred to as the '2% law' because it mandated allocating a minimum

[18] Among others, notable figures include Eugenio Montale, Giuseppe Ungaretti, and Giulio Carlo Argan. The law originated from a debate between Giuseppe Bottai – who was Minister of National Education between 1936 and 1943 – and these figures, who tended to recognize the "public utility value of artistic work," as Bottai himself wrote in a law preceding the L.717/1949, the L.839/1942 (in Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.63). For further readings, see Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, and Collina, 2009.

of two percent of the total investment in new construction projects for artwork creation. This mechanism shares some similarities with the Percent for Art programs in the United States, where supportive policies for art in urban public spaces have been extensively institutionalized compared to Italy.[19] While the law was inconsistently enforced, it was partially repealed in 1975 and further amended in 1978.[20] Nonetheless, various attempts to reinterpret the legislation have occurred over the years, including the publication of the 'Guidelines for the implementation of Law No. 717/1949'[21] in 2007, in 2007, which encouraged regional legislation on the matter (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.64). Despite these revisions,[22] Italy has yet to implement comprehensive policies to support artistic interventions in urban public spaces. Consequently, there have been few instances of artworks realized through the application of these legislative mechanisms.

In the early 2000s, the RER introduced Regional Law 16/02, representing a significant development in Italy's institutional programs aimed at art in urban public spaces. This law, titled "Norms for the recovery of historical-artistic buildings and the promotion of the architectural and landscape quality of the territory" (*Norme per il recupero degli edifici storico-artistici e la promozione della qualità architettonica e paesaggistica del territorio*), established the Region as the first in Italy to offer grants "for the integration, into the urban context, of artworks,"[23] i.e., for "the integration of artworks into infrastructure and public buildings and their relevant areas, during the construction or renovation works. Artworks refer to works of plastic, graphic, pictorial, mosaic, and photographic arts, characterized by a relationship of integration with the architecture in which they are inserted, executed by selected artists, through a specific competitive procedure, by the public administration holding the property or the area where they are to be located".[24] As noted by Mazzucotelli Salice (2015, p.64) and Orlandi (2009), the Regional Law 16/02 was praised for "overcoming conceptual divisions between subjects in favor of a comprehensive approach to the territory," allowing "an enrichment of architectural language," and also enabling "the affirmation of an architecture

[19] Such as the *NEA – National Endowment for the Arts*. For further readings about US policies and programs, see Knight, 2008, and Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, pp.50-52.
[20] Through Law 412/1975 and Decree-Law 817/1978.
[21] The full original title of the legislative text, in Italian, is 'Linee guida per l'applicazione della legge n. 717/1949 recante norme pe l'arte negli edifici pubblici.'
[22] The most recent one is the legislative proposal dated November 14, 2023, A.C. 1315 "Disposizioni per la promozione e la valorizzazione dell'arte nelle opere e negli edifici pubblici." Source: https://documenti.camera.it/Leg19/Dossier/Pdf/CU0066.Pdf (last accessed: February 20, 2024).
[23] From the text of RER's Regional Law 16/02, Art.8, paragraph 2. Original text quoted in Italian: "può concedere contributi [...] per l'inserimento, nel contesto urbano, delle opere d'arte."
[24] From the text of RER's Regional Law 16/02, Art.2, paragraph 1. Original text quoted in Italian: "inserimento di opere d'arte in infrastrutture e edifici pubblici e nelle loro aree di pertinenza, nel corso dei lavori di edificazione o di recupero degli stessi. Per opere d'arte si intendono opere delle arti plastiche, grafiche, pittoriche, musive e fotografiche, caratterizzate da un rapporto di integrazione con l'architettura in cui si inseriscono, eseguite da artisti scelti, attraverso apposita procedura concorsuale, dall'amministrazione pubblica titolare dell'immobile o dell'area nei quali dovranno trovare collocazione."

integrated with art and capable of recognizing its socio-cultural value". [25] Moreover, between 2019 and 2020, the RER launched the *Urban-ER*[26] project, focusing on street art – an art form of historical significance for the region, and even more so for the city of Bologna. The project encompassed experimental research and the creation of a digital archive documenting urban artworks across the region.

Regarding Bologna, the city has shown a longstanding dedication to art in urban public spaces, as mentioned earlier. While its endeavors may have been relatively modest compared to some European counterparts, and even more so to North American or Australian public art scene, Bologna has nonetheless established local programs, guidelines, and policies directed towards artistic interventions in urban public spaces.[27]

A significant recent development occurred in January 2023 with the resolution of the Municipal Council – Culture and Creativity Sector,[28] advocating for the establishment of an "Advisory Commission for Art in Public Space of the Municipality of Bologna" (*Commissione consultiva per l'arte nello spazio pubblico del Comune di Bologna*) along with an "intersectoral working group". As stated in the text of the resolution, the Council describes the appointment of such a commission as "necessary" to respond to the "need of a comprehensive strategy of the Administration" that would "consider the various cultural implications and technical aspects that the [art in public space] theme raises," while recognizing that "the presence of artworks in public spaces (such as statues, monuments, installations, paintings on walls...) significantly shapes the image of Bologna". In essence, while the working group focuses on assessing the "feasibility" of proposed artworks, the Advisory Commission – composed of professors, curators, architects, and directors of local foundations and cultural institutions (such as the Rusconi Foundation and the Museum of Modern Art of Bologna MAMBo) – concentrates on evaluating their "quality". Moreover, the commission is tasked with "monitoring and valorizing" existing artworks in the municipal territory while also advocating for "new strategic public art interventions that contribute to the city's cultural ecosystem".

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the city of Bologna is not the only Italian city to adopt this administrative tool. Another recent example can be found in Milan, where the *Art in Public Space Office* was established at the end of 2020.[29]

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[25] As of September 9, 2022, the 'Database of Places for the Percent for Art' (*Banca dati dei Luoghi del Percento per l'Arte*), established by the RER, counts 158 public places and 355 artworks realized through the application of the 2% law, namely the Regional Law 16/02.

[26] For further information, see https://urbaner.it/.

[27] In this regard, the Municipality of Bologna has established an office within the 'Culture and Creativity' sector specifically dedicated to 'Artistic, Cultural, and Creative Urban Regeneration.'

[28] This is referred to as the Municipal Council Resolution P.G. 33579/2023. Source: https://atti9.comune.bologna.it/atti/wpub_delibere.nsf/%24%24OpenDominoDocument.xsp?documentId=07F480B0F8683C56C125893C007F50ED&action=openDocument (last accessed: February 20, 2024).

[29] Source: https://www.comune.milano.it/aree-tematiche/spazi-per-attivita-ed-eventi/arte-negli-spazi-pubblici-a-milano (last accessed: February 20, 2024). While acknowledging the

Regarding the operationality of this administrative tool, the Advisory Commission of the Municipal Council of Bologna has introduced a public online form accessible to "artists, artwork owners, companies, associations, and citizens" for submitting proposals for artworks intended for “placement”[30] in public spaces. These proposals undergo a verification and approval process by both the working group and the Commission.

This local policy needs to be understood within the wider measures implemented by the Municipality in July 2022. These measures primarily aim at systematic cleaning operations, specifically targeting spontaneous, unauthorized, or non-commissioned street art works, such as graffiti and tags, from the walls of the city (e.g., Figure 31). This includes works on private properties, particularly within the *Centro Storico* area.[31]



Figure 31: A citizen of the Santo Stefano district, in Bologna, repainting a wall in the *Centro Storico*, previously covered with graffiti, 2023. Source: Comune di Bologna, Iperbole.

transformative and social significance of 'art in public space,' it's noteworthy to mention the specific interpretation that the Municipal Council of Milan adopts for this concept. Their focus primarily centers on street art expressions, overlooking other forms of artistic intervention. This approach is evident in their designation of “a series of 'Free Walls' for free expression in a self-managed manner for the creation of street art,” as stated in the press release of October 20, 2020. Source: https://www.comune.milano.it/-/cultura.-nasce-l-ufficio-arte-negli-spazi-pubblici- (last accessed: February 20, 2024).

[30] Source: https://www.culturabologna.it/documents/proporre-opere-d-arte-nello-spazio-pubblico (last accessed: February 20, 2024). In this context, it is worth noting that the form is prominently featured on the homepage of the *Bologna Cultura* portal, specifically within the 'Opportunities' section.

[31] On July 29, 2022, the Mayor of Bologna, Matteo Lepore, posted a video on his Facebook page promoting the initiative in which he stated, "One of the most detestable things for a city is graffiti on walls [*scritte sui muri*], especially in historic centers." Source: https://fb.watch/qkhoR8YcJR/ (last accessed: February 20, 2024). See also: https://www.bolognatoday.it/cronaca/graffiti-scritte-muri-palazzi-privati-condomini-comune-bologna.html (last accessed: February 20, 2024). Furthermore, it is noted that the text of the resolution lists among the various roles of the Advisory Commission Art in Public Space that of “evaluating the appropriateness of murals and other works present in specific areas of the city, supporting the activities of the Municipal Administration in the context of the strategy to combat graffiti vandalism.”

As will be further discussed in the empirical chapters, both the establishment of the Advisory Commission on art in public spaces and the cleaning operations emerged as recurring themes in the interviews with artists. These narratives often portray an oppositional stance, criticizing municipal policies while also engaging with the discourse surrounding 'urban decorum', a central debate in various Italian and European cities, especially historic ones. Moreover, such narratives reflect the "oppositional model" of artistic practices in urban public spaces in Italy, a concept dating back to the 1960s-1980s and extensively documented in the literature (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.65).

3.1.2 Micro-case study (mCS) and its criteria: The urban artistic practices

I based the construction of the micro-case criteria on three "empirical entities" (see Merkens 2004), meaning that each artistic practice is considered in terms of: (1) a local *artist*; (2) the *urban art-work* produced by the local artist; (3) the specific *urban site* within Bologna where the local artist engages with their art-work. These three entities formed the parameters used for looking at the urban artistic practice, and consequently served as the inclusion-exclusion criteria for selecting the practices under investigation.

Artists

My focus during sample selection (see Subsection 3.2.1 for a detailed description of the sampling technique and procedures) centered on local art practices characterized by a non-institutional and public nature. This criterion meant that these practices encompassed artistic endeavors that originated from the grassroots or were self-initiated by either local individuals or group-collectives, including *artists* (coded as A), *cultural experts* and *curators* (coded as C), and *representatives of local cultural associations* (coded as R). The "publicness" (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.43) and urban character of the selected practices were essential criteria. All of the selected practices either were engaged or had previously engaged to varying degrees with the urban public environment, and most of their production was directed towards it. Moreover, all of the selected individuals either permanently or temporarily resided within the Metropolitan City of Bologna during the research period. All of them were active participants in the Bolognese art scene. I concentrated on selecting only the 'founding members' of each practice as participants for the sample, specifically the artists who first initiated that particular UAP. Typically, I obtained this information from the practice's public websites or social media platforms, or from my key informants.

In total, the sample consisted of 12 UAPs, involving a total of 17 participants (9 female; 8 male) from diverse demographic backgrounds, genders, and career stages, aged 30 to 65. Among these UAPs, 6 were artistic collectives, while the remaining 6 were individual artists.

To generate an internal differentiation in the data, as well as to mitigate potential research biases tied to specific artistic expressions, I selected practices

across diverse art-forms. These forms included: *visual art* (e.g., photography, video projections), *performance art* (e.g., walks), *installation art* (e.g., architectural installations, sculptures), *street art* (e.g., graffiti, murals), and *curatorial art* (e.g., artist-run spaces). This selection criterion aligns with what has already emerged from previous studies (cf., Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015), which highlighted the fundamentally hybrid and composite nature of creating art in urban spaces, as illustrated in the previous chapter. Therefore, the sample included artists who produced art-works that blended different artistic forms (for example, painting a mural is described by the artist, and thus publicly sanctioned and enacted, as a performance). Furthermore, it included artists who embraced cross-disciplinary influences divergent from their original backgrounds. For instance, an individual that, despite having been trained as an architectural designer, or even as a chemist, ventured into the visual arts, ultimately transitioning into public art. To this purpose, I identified the roles of the participants (artist; curator; representative) and the different artistic forms (visual art; installation; performance; curatorial; street art) by considering how the participant (or groups) self-identified and described their work. This assessment was based on information provided by the participants during our initial meeting (access meeting) and on the public communication and promotion of their practice (e.g., on social media). I excluded art expressions such as folk art or traditional art.

Each participant and their practice has been anonymized by assigning them an alphanumeric code, such as: *00* (participant number) *BO* (Bologna) *A* or *C* or *R* (respectively, artist; curator; representative); and *00* (practice number) *BO* (Bologna).

	Artist role	**Gender**	**Art expressions in UAP**	**Artist code**	**UAP code**
1	Artist	Female	Installation Performance Visual art	01BO A	01BO
2	Artist	Male	Installation Performance Visual art	02BO A	
3	Artist/Curator/Representative	Female	Curatorial	03BO ACR	02BO
4	Artist/Curator	Female	Visual art Installation Curatorial Performance	04BO AC	03BO

5	Artist	Male	Visual art Installation Performance	05BO A	
6	Artist	Male	Installation	06BO A	04BO
7	Artist/Curator	Female	Curatorial Visual art	07BO AC	
8	Artist	Male	Performance Installation	08BO A	05BO
9	Artist/Curator/Representative	Female	Curatorial Street art Performance Visual art	09BO ACR	06BO
10	Artist/Curator	Female	Curatorial Street art Performance Visual art	10BO AC	
11	Artist/Curator/Representative	Male	Curatorial Performance	11BO ACR	07BO
12	Curator/Representative	Female	Curatorial	12BO CR	08BO
13	Artist	Male	Street art Visual art	13BO A	09BO
14	Artist/Curator	Female	Curatorial Installation Street art Performance	14BO AC	10BO
15	Artist/Curator	Female	Curatorial Installation Performance Visual art	15BO AC	11BO
16	Artist	Male	Performance	17BO A	12BO
17	Artist	Male	Performance	18BO A	

Table 1: Artists in the study (from Bologna, Italy).

Urban art-works

Concerning the selection of urban art-works, I consulted the artists themselves. In brief, during the access meeting and after outlining the study's goals (see Subsection 3.2.2), I requested each artist to consider one to three art-works that, in their view, could best represent the intersection of their artistic practice with Bologna. Then, I briefly discussed with them their rationale for selecting those particular works. On one hand, this approach was designed to avoid imposing a preconceived selection that could limit the depth of content elicited, thereby bracketing my preconceptions and prior knowledge of their artistic production. On the other hand, it sought to pinpoint, right from the initial meeting, the specific moment or instance in a participant's artistic production that, for them, signified a connection with the city.

As highlighted by Becker et al. (2016), the aspect of *time* (and temporality) is central when dealing with CPs in contemporary art-making. When does a work start? When is it finished? For how long is it intended to last? Owing to the ephemeral character of the majority of the urban art-works indicated by the participants, as well as their sometimes 'unrealized' or 'unfinished' nature, I accounted for a *temporal variable* when considering their art-works. This entailed concurrent consideration of: (1) art-works that had already taken place; (2) art-works that were planned or staged for the future, or that were unrealized; (3) art-works that were presently underway.

I assumed that considering a temporally diverse array of art-works would be beneficial for conducting a thorough assessment of commonalities, recurring indicators, evolving patterns of artistic action and their outcomes, as well as inherent differences, essentially triangulating retrospective recollections with *in actu* documentation. I believed that this approach could shed light on how artists, across the CP, operated within a specific site, their intentions for future site engagement, and their current engagements within a given site.

During fieldwork, I identified a total of 26 art-works, corresponding to 34 urban sites in Bologna – at both the Municipal and Metropolitan City levels.

As for recurring artistic expression or forms, the identified art-works predominantly exhibited installation and performative aspects, immediately followed by curatorial, street art, and visual art. Recurrent hybridizations were mainly occurring between these latter three forms, and installation and performative ones.

Regarding their placement within the city, I chose to distinguish the art-works between *mono-site* (instantiated at and for a single site, as a 'one-time-only' entity; 13 art-works) and *multi-site* (instantiated at different sites or occurring in or across multiple locations; 13 art-works).

Often, the mono-site nature of an art-work proved corresponding, in terms of its mobility, to a fixedness regarding the site (*fixed*). Conversely, a multi-site art-work could be moved from one location to another (*mobile*). However, in multiple cases, it was found that a multi-site art-work was considered fixed (for example, an art-work whose instantiation in different sites of the city necessarily depended on

the presence of a specific feature of the urban location - such as a brick wall, or a bus stop), while a mono-site one was considered mobile (for example, in the case of a performance defining an entire street segment as its site, the mobile component was represented by the participant in the performance, moving along the designated urban space). Overlaps of this kind were also found in cases such as an artist's 'studio', representing not only the urban location of the art-work, but being understood as the art-work itself, especially in instances like artist-run spaces.

Finally, returning to the aspect of temporality of the identified art-works, the majority of them exhibited a markedly *temporary* character, with only 4 out of 26 art-works defined as *permanent*. The time duration (planned, i.e., sanctioned) of the collected temporary works varied significantly from short-term (a single day) to long-term (one or more years), with a prevalence of the former.

In Table 2 below, I have cataloged all identified art-works regarding their sites, as well as the artistic forms characterizing them, their placement, mobility, and temporality.[32] The art-works have been cataloged, and consequently anonymized, by assigning each of them an alphanumeric code, such as: *AW* (art-work) *0000* (art-work number) *BO* (Bologna).

UAP code	**Art-work code**	**Site**	**Art-work expressions**	**Art-work placing**	**Art-work mobility**	**Art-work temporality**	**Time**
01BO	AW01BO	Palazzina Liberty at the Giardini Margherita	Installation Performance	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	8 to 10/07/2016
	AW02BO		Installation				2024 UNR
	AW03BO	Wall in Bolognina neighborhood Palazzo D'Accursio Courtyard	Performance	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	2017 - ongoing
	AW04BO	Piazza Maggiore	Installation	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	31/01/2023 to 01/01/2024 UNR
02BO	AW05BO	Former commercial space in Via Eugenio Curiel	Curatorial	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	2020 - ongoing

[32] Throughout the rest of this manuscript, I will make reference to this catalog whenever discussing different art-works.

	AW06BO	Parking space in Via Eugenio Curiel	Installation	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	04/10/2020 to 30/07/2021
	AW07BO	Public garden in Via Eugenio Curiel	Installation	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	04/01/2023 - ongoing
03BO	AW08BO	Piazza Verdi	Installation	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	2009
		Piazza Anna Magnani				Permanent	2011
	AW09BO	Portici of Via Zamboni	Visual art Performance	Mono-site	Mobile	Temporary	15/12/2021
	AW10BO						22 to 23/06/2018
04BO	AW11BO	From former warehouse in Rastignano to Via del Paleotto	Performance Curatorial Visual art	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	28/01/2024
			Installation Curatorial			Permanent	28/01/2023
	AW12BO	Parking lot in Via Serrabella	Installation Performance	Multi-site	Mobile	Temporary	31/12/2021
		Former commercial space in Via Eugenio Curiel	Installation				29/04/2022 to 22/05/2022
		Junction between Via XXI Aprile and Via Giovanni Paolo Martini	Installation Performance				22/05/2022
	AW13BO	Junction between Via Ferrarese and Via Algardi	Installation Performance	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	13/11/2022
05BO	AW14BO	Former commercial space in Via Massimo Gorki	Art-run space Curatorial	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	2017 - ongoing
	AW15BO	Europa Unita garden in Savena neighborhood	Installation Performance	Multi-site	Mobile	Temporary	25/07/2020
		Jerzy Popiełuszko garden in Borgo Panigale					05 to 20/09/2020

06BO	AW16BO	Former turner space in Vicolo de' Facchini	Curatorial	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	29/01/2024 - ongoing
	AW17BO	Walls of electricity cabins in the Trilogia Navile complex	Street art	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	2019 to 2020
		INA-Casa residential complex "Cavedone"	Street art Performance				2022 to 2023
	AW18BO	All the TPer bus stop Line 28	Installation Curatorial Visual art	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	2018 – 2019 – 2020 - 2021 -2022 – 2023 – 2024 - ongoing
		TPer bus stops at Bologna Central Train Station					
		Ex ticket office TPer Lame-Marconi					
		Parking lot APCOA					
		Ticket office TPer Fiera Piazza Costituzione					
		Civic Center in Via Massimo Gorki					
		Albani Market					
		Piazza Aldrovandi					
		Piazza Verdi					
		Piazza del VIII Agosto					
		Shops in Vicolo de' Facchini					
		Octagonal kiosk TPer in Via IV Novembre					

		All the TPer bus stop Line 27					
07BO	AW19BO	Moline canal	Performance	Mono-site	Mobile	Temporary	2015 and 1998
08BO	AW20BO	Former commercial space in Strada Maggiore	Curatorial	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	2020 to 11/05/2022
09BO	AW21BO	Walls of two abandoned factories in Savena neighborhood	Street art	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	2019
	AW22BO	Walls of mechanical room in Imola	Street art	Mono-site	Fixed	Permanent	2019
10BO	AW23BO	Bologna Central Train Station indoor and outdoor spaces	Curatorial Performance Installation	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	1997 to 2005
	AW24BO	Pianoro (whole town)	Curatorial Performance Installation	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	02/2004 - ongoing
		Della Pace Park	Installation			Permanent	2010
		Front garden of Library Silvio Muccini					2011
11BO	AW25BO	From via Marzabotto to Prati di Caprara	Performance Installation Visual art	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	2023 - ongoing
12BO	AW26BO	From Bologna Central Bus Station to Bologna airport	Performance	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	15 to 26/06/2023 and 5 to 9/09/2023

Table 2: Urban art-works and related Urban sites in the study (from Bologna, Italy)

Urban sites

With regards to the urban sites in Bologna, these were dependent on the pre-emptive selection of artists and their art-works. In other words, the identification of specific sites in Bologna was always a consequence of the discussion with the

participant, who would indicate together an art-work and its connected site (or sites) during the access meeting (see Subsection 3.2.2).

The maps in Figure 32 and Figure 33 spatially reconstruct the entirety of the sites in Bologna – both at the level of the Metropolitan City and the Municipality of Bologna – with respect to the art-works of the selected artists (as listed in Table 2).

The urban sites identified by the artists predominantly included public gathering spaces (e.g., squares, public parks), abandoned or disused areas, road infrastructures (e.g., streets, bridges), commercial activities (e.g., supermarkets), private cultural spaces (e.g., art-run spaces, galleries), and industrial areas.

As for the recurrence of the emerged sites, I found a prevalence of sites located in the historic center of the city, with a greater concentration in the areas of the Central Station, Piazza Maggiore, and the University area, or in the Marconi and Irnerio areas, respectively part of the Porto-Saragozza and Santo Stefano neighborhoods.

Concerning the areas outside the historic center, as well as peripheral ones, the art-works were predominantly concentrated in the Navile district, particularly in the Bolognina area. High concentrations are also found in the Costa area of the Porto-Saragozza neighborhood, in the Colli and Murri areas in Santo Stefano, and in the Savena district, with some cases located in the Corticella area and, more externally at the Metropolitan City level, in Rastignano and in the municipality of Pianoro.

I also considered the material dimension of the sites targeted by the art-works, which often aided in defining clearer spatial constraints, in conjunction with the participants' indications. Material elements, moreover, possess their own *agency*, as discussed in Chapter 2, making them not only products of social action but also *agents* capable of shaping the forms of sociality that occur within and interact with them (Gell, 1998; Tilley, 2001).

In Figure 32 and Figure 33, it is possible to reconstruct, at a spatial level, both the placement and the mobility of the various art-works, inferring – graphically – on the recurring art forms employed by the participants in their productions. In the maps, I represented the 26 art-works in two ways: as *marks*, in the case of art-works that were 'anchored to the site', such as an installation or a mural; or as *routes*, in the case of art-works that 'unfolded in space' following predetermined paths that could cross different sites, as in the case of a performative walk.

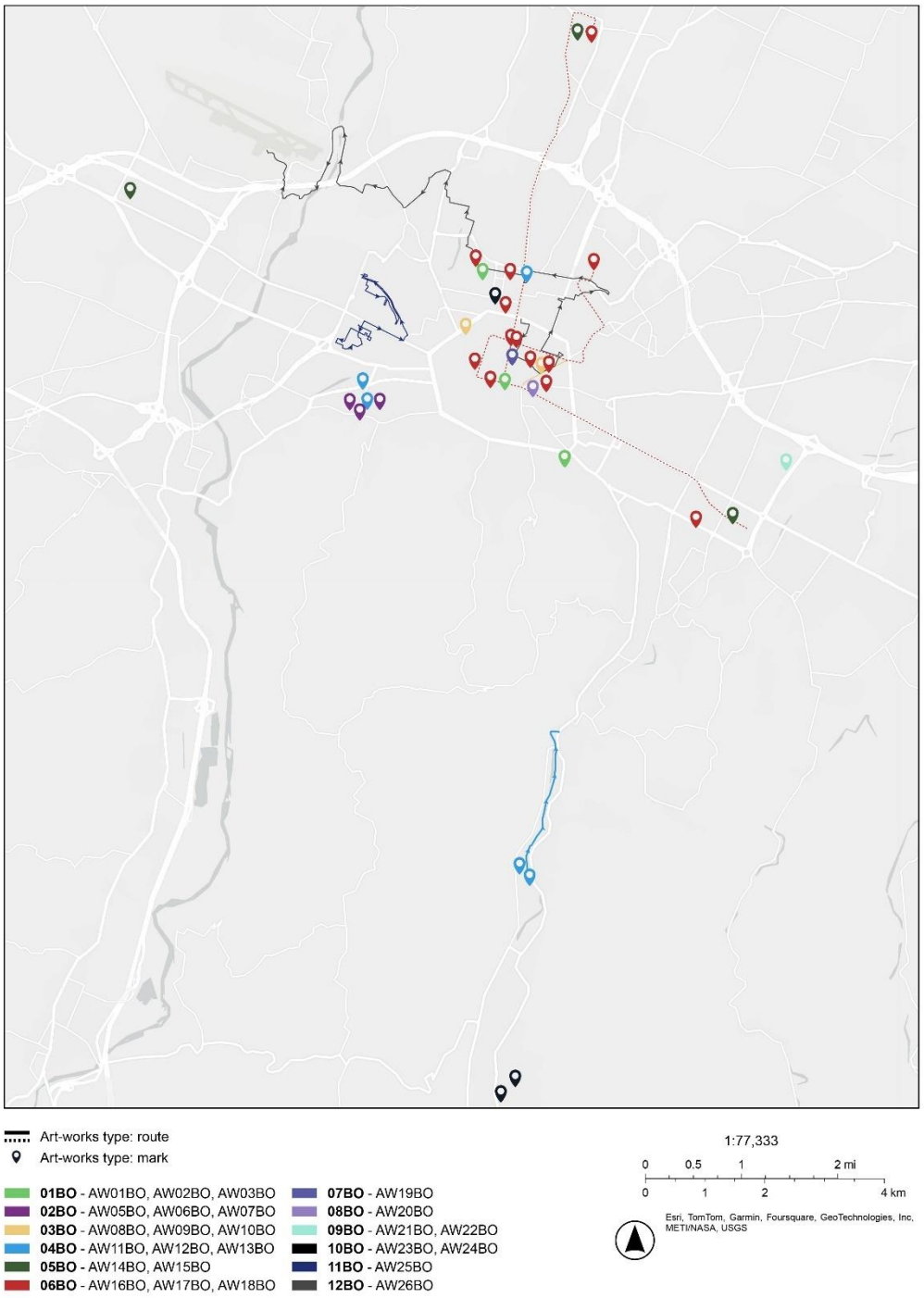


Figure 32: Map of Urban art-works and related Urban sites in the study; focus at Metropolitan City level (from Bologna, Italy). Illustration: own work.

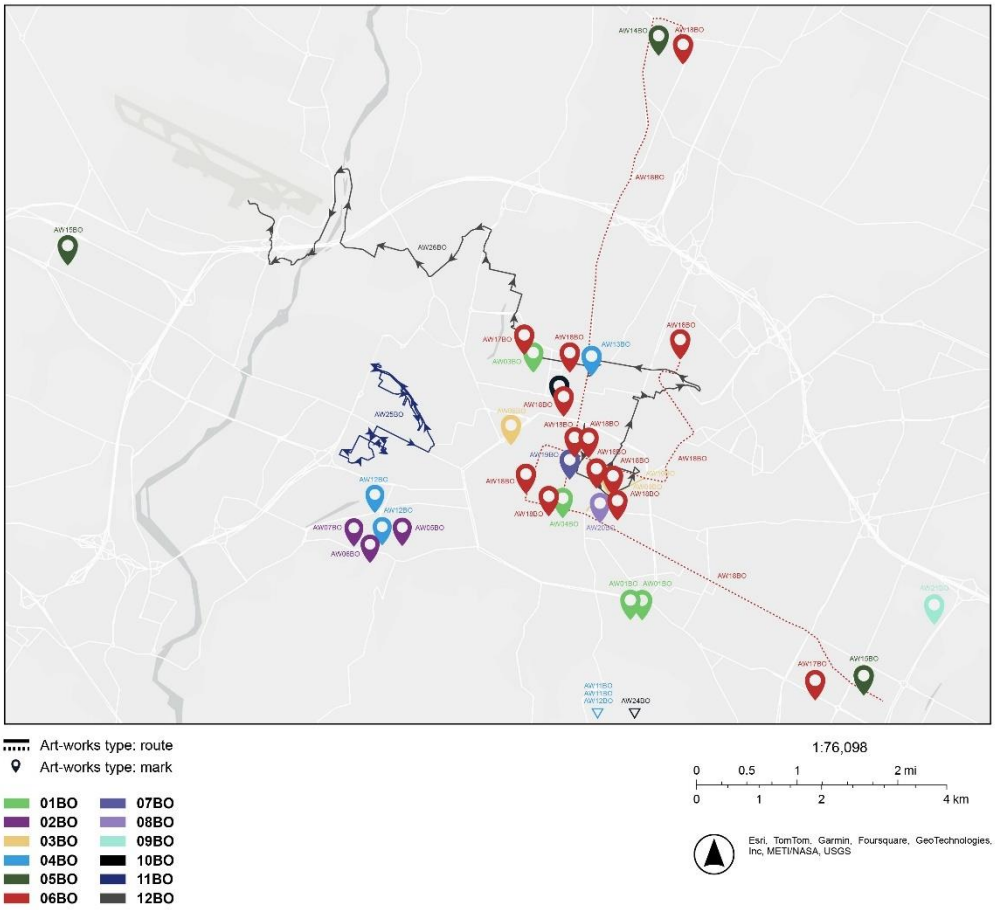


Figure 33: Map of Urban art-works and related Urban sites in the study; focus at Municipality of Bologna level (from Bologna, Italy). Illustration: own work.

3.1.3 Three case studies of UAP

As previously introduced, the 'empirical heart' of this research consists of three individual case studies of UAP in Bologna, selected from the larger sample: 01BO - *Antonello Ghezzi*, 04BO - *This Is So Temporary (TIST)*, and 06BO - *Serendippo*. Each of these UAPs is composed of 2 participants, totaling 6 individuals. For these three cases, my focus was on documenting (through visual ethnography; see Subsection 3.2.5), the CP of some of their art-works (seven art-works in total), adding to the data from the in-depth semi-structured interviews. Chronologically speaking, I conducted the fieldwork related to these three case studies only after conducting the semi-structured interviews with the entire sample. Unlike how I dealt with the various practices and participants that were part of the overall sample, here I have opted to refer to these three specific cases by the names, aliases, and titles provided by the artists themselves for their own practice and art-works. This decision was made with the prior written consent of each participant involved. However, the identities of the participants remain anonymized.

The central issue – to recur to the major question of my study – was to understand how and at what moments or stages the experience of the city's change and its sites impacted (or did not impact at all) the process of creating an urban art-work, i.e, how it impacted the urban art-work itself.

Some introductory notes are necessary here. All three selected UAP case studies are artistic collective or groups. Why choose this particular configuration of practice for my research purposes? I believed that a preference for practices involving diverse artists, in terms of background and origin, who 'create together' in a certain context, at a certain time, through the combination of different art forms operationalized through specific methods and motivations, would broaden the range of experiences and processes explored, thus constructing a more robust knowledge base.

Another fundamental concern revolved around generalization, which, within the framework of a case study research approach, inherently entails a specific analytical stance by the researcher. Although my focus remained on understanding practices – that is, organized *activities and processes* of creating and consolidating individual urban art-works concerning the experience of a changing human environment – my considerations about the choice of case studies retained an intention of generalization of what would emerge from these explorations. The interest, in a forward-looking sense, was directed at both the case itself and what it could tell us about the studied phenomenon more generally. My concerns found correspondence in the words of Becker et al. (2016, p.17). In the introductive reflections to their edited volume collecting ethnographies of artistic works *Art from Start to Finish*, they raise the issue of generalization of empirical inquiries in the arts based on a single case study. They interpret their approach to generalization as the desire to synthesize "a general dimension that could be used to analyze specific works and to see how the understanding of particular works could tell us somethings useful for the understanding of other works and other ways" of artistic making. Far from claims of universality or probabilistic in nature, a different type of art making generalization emerges, which Becker et al. (2016, p.18) define as a "generic problem-multiple solution pair". In creating an art-work, some ordinary problems tend to emerge. The solutions to these common problems, Becker et al. assert, "give the artworks their distinctive characteristics", thus permeating the entire CP. These problems could be synthesized through quite pragmatic questions such as: *How can we actually do the thing we feel we want to do? How can we make what we are doing interact with the context in which we find ourselves? What might be the response of the people who will experience what we are doing?* or *How do we know when we can consider what we are doing finished, whatever it is?* While it is reasonable to imagine one or more "familiar resemblances" (Becker et al. 2016, p.19) between the solutions implemented by artists to respond to these generic 'urgencies' (a term that has insistently emerged from almost all the interviewees in this study), as well as between the organizational processes activated to articulate them, none of these is truly identical to one another. "The millions of existing solutions are the raw material we use to add new dimensions to what we already

have thought through" (Becker et al. 2016, p.19). Hence, in this context, generalization should be comprehended as a process that begins with *particularization*, focusing on individual cases of artistic activity and preferring depth over scope, and that only subsequently involves cross-comparison. This understanding of comparison would then be centered on cases *commonalities* – for example, a story of a particular neighborhood in Bologna rendered in the form of a mural – while it would also highlight their *differences* – executed, in one case, through an authorized performance or participatory workshop, and in another, as an unauthorized bombing action, away from public view. Indeed, "by looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases, we can understand a single-case finding, grounding it by specifying how and where and, if possible, why it carries on as it does. We can strengthen the precision, the validity, and the stability of the findings" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 29, in Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.49-50).

3.2 Methodological triangulation: qualitative approaches, methods, procedures and protocols

In considering both the interdisciplinary nature of the research project and its case study design, I deemed it necessary to employ a multi-method[33] inquiry strategy, namely *triangulation*.

Following Flick's definition (2004, p.178), triangulation refers to "the observation of the research issue from (at least) two different points," and, according to Denzin (1978) (in Flick, 2004, p.178), it can take four forms: triangulation of data, investigator triangulation, triangulation of theories, and methodological triangulation.

In this context, the triangulation strategy I chose was *methodological triangulation*, which I based on the pragmatic assumption that "there are no intrinsically good or bad methods; in each circumstance, there will be methods that are more or less well suited to particular research questions" (Foster, 2024, p.12).

My research object, which was strongly focused on the meanings and internal dynamics of the individual-artist's experience, conceived simultaneously as an experience of the changes within the context in which they live and operate, as well as the processes and products of their creative work, required - in my view - the combined use of specific qualitative methods that would allow me to probe the depth and complexity of those experiences and reconstruct them through rigorous data collection, in order to produce a 'thick' cultural interpretation of the phenomenon under study. Norman Denzin reminds us that "the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding

[33] 'Multi-method' here should not be confused with the concept of 'Mixed-Methods,' where the latter refers to a specific approach to scientific research that combines (often, but not exclusively) methods from both qualitative and quantitative research. It is worth recalling, in this regard, Denzin (2012, p.82): "qualitative research is inherently multimethod in focus (Flick, 2007). In its original forms (Denzin, 1970), triangulation referred only to the use of multiple forms of qualitative research methods."

of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. We only know a thing through its representations. Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation but an alternative to validation (Flick, 2007). The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry (see Flick, 2002, 2007)" (Denzin, 2012, p.82).

To this end, the two triangulated data collection methods were: *in-depth semi-structured interviews* and *visual ethnography*. Both methods involved my extensive exposure and attendance to, as well as participation in, the studied phenomenon, namely a long period of fieldwork, structured through a thorough definition of the procedures and techniques aimed at operationalizing these methods.

Within the fieldwork, the application of the two methods unfolded chronologically as follows: initially, (1) I conducted semi-structured interviews with the entire sample composed of 12 UAPs (17 participants); subsequently, (2) I engaged in visual ethnography, exclusively conducted with the three specific case studies of UAPs (6 participants). The portion of fieldwork in Bologna during which I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews lasted for seven months, specifically from the beginning of November 2022 to the end of June 2023, while the visual ethnography lasted for six months, specifically from the beginning of July 2023 to the end of January 2024.

Subscribing to a pragmatist approach, seeking to adopt a "pluralist, compatibilist and open-minded methodological position" (Foster, 2024, p.12), I understood possible issues of paradigmatic compatibility between methods following what Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) identified as a *dialectical model* of compatibility. Recognizing that different qualitative methods rested on different specific epistemological assumptions and disciplinary histories (Denzin, 2012, p.82), here, the chosen methods dialectically worked "back and forth between a variety of tension points" (Denzin, 2012, p.81). In the context of my interdisciplinary study, when triangulating interviews with visual ethnography, I understood these tensions existing mostly between what Merriam and Tisdell defined as the *emic-etic* perspectives; on the one hand, "the emic perspective, that of the insider to the culture," while on the other hand, "the etic, that of the researcher or outsider" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 29).

These concerns were present throughout the entire fieldwork and were met with constant reflexivity and self-inquiry – as well as critical skepticism (Fine, 2019) – about their operationalization within my research practices. I consistently questioned how my positionality and background were influencing the *practical* choices I was making and the consequences and meanings of the actions I was taking *in actu*, as I believed that these factors could only be partially addressed and thus made sense of in advance of experience.

I also believed that the choice to employ methodological triangulation did not compromise the coherence and validity of the research's case study design but rather was particularly useful for its articulation. As emphasized by Merriam and

Tisdell, “unlike experimental, survey, or historical research, case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis. Any and all methods of gathering data, from testing to interviewing, can be used in a case study, although certain techniques are used more than others” (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 42).

In this section, I will discuss in detail each of the two methods used, both from a theoretical-epistemological perspective and, in particular, regarding their operationalization, presenting the protocols and procedures developed and their application during fieldwork. I will also introduce the participant sampling technique used in the study, as well as my approach regarding field access and ethical issues.

3.2.1 Sampling technique and procedure

I initially employed a convenience sampling to select participants from the two cities who I identified as “information-rich” (Patton, 2002) and capable of providing substantial insights into the subject matter. Subsequently, I implemented the snowball sampling technique. Random sampling methods were not factored into this study's design.

One quarter of the participants were identified through a detailed examination of their personal and professional websites, as well as their presence on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and various social gatherings. I personally initiated contact with them and introduced them to the objectives of the research study. Two quarters of the participants were recruited through the snowball sampling method, while the remaining quarter was recruited via my network of acquaintances, who were key informants. I contacted and subsequently recruited the majority of participants through direct communication channels, primarily by their personal email addresses and/or phone numbers.

The determination of the sample size—i.e., the necessary number of participants—was solely contingent on the accumulation of data. This approach dictated that recruitment and interview processes continued until a point of data saturation was reached (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.80).

3.2.2 Approaching the participants: access and ethics

To engage with the participants, I employed a two-step approach. Firstly, I arranged a meeting to establish access; secondly, I interviewed, observed or documented them and their work by conducting the in-depth semi-structured interview, together with the visual ethnography for the three core case studies.

The *access meeting* was an informal conversation with the artists, typically held at their studio or another location of their choosing, somewhere that felt natural and comfortable to them. After introducing ourselves, I explained the key components of my research. Together, we then identified one to three specific art-

works from their production to be examined, together with their respective urban locations in Bologna. The access meeting usually lasted for about 30 to 60 minutes. Its purpose was to lay the necessary groundwork for the upcoming in-depth interview, address any uncertainties or questions about the study, build rapport, and schedule a suitable date for the interview. The interview that followed adhered to the procedures outlined in Subsections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4, while the visual ethnography was carried out as explained in Subsections 3.2.5 and 3.2.6.

Participants were generally receptive and cooperative from the initial contact onwards. Essentially, all the artists I encountered during my year-long fieldwork displayed a tendency to be open, highly self-reflective, and eager to engage, especially once they grasped the significance of their participation. They typically showed enthusiasm for supporting my study when I clearly outlined the subject matter. Many artists expressed a sense of surprise due to my interest, as a researcher, in their work, sharing with me, in some notable cases, intimate reflections about how until that moment (usually corresponding to the interview) "we had never thought so deeply about what we do... about how we do it" – to quote the words of one participant.

I took every possible step to ensure data protection and data processing fairness for all participants, whether individuals or groups. I sought and obtained informed consent from all participants at every stage of the research. I clarified my identity and the study details during multiple stages of participant engagement, including in the initial outreach, at the access meeting, and at the start of the interview. At the beginning of each interview, I provided the participants with the ICF and requested their signature.

Although this research did not explore highly sensitive subjects, few participating artists expressed concern about preserving their anonymity. This concern was especially notable among those with varying degrees of involvement in activities that may be considered illegal. I explicitly communicated to participants that the study was solely for scientific purposes. I assured them that their participation would be treated with confidentiality and their anonymity would be maintained, as detailed in the ICF (Appendix Q).

As described in Subsection 3.1.2, I have anonymized each participant – as well as their practice – by assigning them an alphanumeric code, such as: *00* (participant number) *BO* (Bologna) *A* or *C* or *R* (respectively, artist; curator; representative).

3.2.3 Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative research usually relies on methods and techniques aimed at understanding the mechanisms and phenomena underlying the meanings individuals attribute to their lived experiences, connecting them to the context in which they originated. To this purpose, interviews serve as a highly valuable qualitative tool for studying reality. In this context, an interview can be defined as "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused

on questions related to a research study" (deMarrais, 2004, p.55). Interviews provide access to how individuals narrate their own experiences and daily realities, describing what they live and do, both individually and in interaction with others, within a specific context.

Addressing the entirety of individuals composing the broader sample of UAPs, in this study I opted to utilize *in-depth semi-structured interviews*. This type of interview incorporates a combination of structured and unstructured questions, offering flexibility and sensitivity to the flow of conversation between the researcher and the interviewee, while still being guided by a predetermined list of specific themes to be explored with each individual participant in a non-strict order (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.89). The semi-structured interview prompt participants to reconstruct various segments of their lived experiences, allowing insight into how they impose order on these experiences to give meaning to their actions (Mazzucotelli Salice, 2015, p.156). I determined that structured or highly structured interviews (e.g., questionnaires) were unsuitable for the research objectives.

My decision to utilize an interview technique focused heavily on the individual (the artist), regarded as both an expert and a competent subject, while also considering their specific social context, emerged from the peculiarly underexplored nature of the research subject. Furthermore, my interest in events and processes that occurred in the past, which were consequently impossible to observe directly or replicate, necessitated the use of a retrospective elicitation technique.

My questions were open-ended, exploring "what" and "how" aspects, while avoiding seeking explanatory content of the "why" type, except during moments of reflexivity, which I considered essential for understanding the meanings behind human actions. They were primarily aimed at reconstructing narratives of the artist's experiences and behaviors, starting from their particular perspective. These questions focused on the activities, behaviors, actions, and organizational efforts of the individual, both alone and in collaboration with others, as well as the contextualized meaning they attributed to them. Some questions also took on an interpretative form, allowing me to check my understanding while minimizing leading questions as much as possible. Additionally, I incorporated questions related to the background of the participant and their artistic practice, often using them as introductory 'grand-tour' openers for the interview.

The structuring of the interview, which I will elaborate on in detail in Subsection 3.2.4, was influenced by the qualitative interview technique known as the *artist interview* (Beerkens et al., 2012). This approach originated in the field of curatorship and conservation of contemporary art, starting from the assumption that an understanding and conservation based purely on studies of material sciences is inapplicable to modern and contemporary artworks, given their predominantly process-based, ephemeral, unstable, and sometimes non-physical (conceptual) nature – for example, their being based on rules, as already discussed in Chapter 2. An alternative approach centered on investigating and analyzing the artist's

experience along with the meaning they give to the creative process and development of their artwork, rather than focusing on the art-object alone, is now widely recognized and employed as a qualitative research method in contemporary arts studies. Although my research did not deal with the conservation of art-works produced by UAPs, the artist interview method shared with the semi-structured interview characteristics and practical procedures that I deemed useful for investigating my research object, namely the artist's experience, the organizational process underlying urban art-works (the CP), and the content of the artistic work. Furthermore, given that this technique is often employed in case study contexts (case interview), it aligned well with my research design. Typically, an artist interview takes place in the presence of the artist's work, which, together with the artist themselves, represents the case study. This relational aspect was particularly relevant in terms of the methodological triangulation I employed, not only in relation to interviews, but especially concerning the visual ethnography conducted with the three UAP cases, as discussed in Subsections 3.2.5 and 3.2.6.

The interviews were conducted as person-to-person encounters, which, depending on the UAP, could involve a single participant who was a member of the practice or two participants simultaneously. In instances involving multiple participants, I considered and interpreted the information emerging from the conversation among the various communicating subjects – including myself, in the role of the researcher – as being constructed within the interaction of the group.

3.2.4 Interview questions and procedures

The portion of fieldwork in Bologna during which I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews lasted for seven months, specifically from the beginning of November 2022 to the end of June 2023.

In a conventional in-depth semi-structured interview, there are typically three distinct interview sections, with an overall duration ranging from 60 to 120 minutes. In this study, the average duration of interviews for each participant extended to approximately 120 minutes, with some sessions lasting up to 240 minutes. I divided these longer interviews into two separate sessions, scheduled on different days to accommodate the comprehensive exploration of the subject matter. The interview was typically held at the artist' studio or another location of their choosing. I recorded each interview using a tape recorder. The purpose of this measure was to ensure the comprehensive collection of information. With one participant alone, I conducted the interview remotely via a video call using a videotelephony software (such as Zoom). In this instance, I audio and video recorded the conversation. Prior to conducting each interview, I individually requested permission from the participants regarding the recording. In order to ensure the preservation of participant anonymity, the ICF included an assurance that tape recordings would be adequately destroyed upon completion of the study and would remain strictly private, accessible only to the researcher's supervisors,

relevant committees, and naturally, myself. Note-taking was also employed during interviews. In total, I conducted 11 interviews.

Pre-interview steps were:

1. Scheduling: I contacted the artist or artists, via e-mail or telephone, to arrange the interview, covering its date, time, and location. During this communication, I provided a detailed explanation of the rationale, purpose, and significance of the interview, ensuring that the participants comprehend the research aims;
2. Preparation: I carefully studied and reviewed the questions in the interview guideline;
3. Equipment: I checked and readied the essential equipment and tools. This included ensuring the functionality and availability of a tape recorder, and the paper sheet containing the interview guideline.

During-interview steps were:

1. Introduction: I initiated the interview by establishing rapport with the artist or artists, and by reiterating the purpose of the research;
2. Consent: I asked the artist or artists to provide signed consent for recording and participation before collecting the data, using the ICF;
3. Eliciting: I started the interview by asking the first question in the interview guideline and proceeded in conducting the session.

The 26 interview questions (interview guideline) I utilized in this study were open-ended. I developed them in alignment with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning my research. During the study, I revised the questions based on emerging insights from the collected data and its analysis. In total, three versions of the guideline were produced.

I structured the interview guideline into three distinct thematic parts, accompanied by concluding remarks. These parts encompassed (1) an exploration of the artist and their artistic practice's background, (2) the artist's relationship to Bologna, and (3) the CP involved in producing the urban art-work related to a chosen urban site.

Gradually, the conversation evolved from an open narrative to more specific topics. This approach encouraged participants to speak as freely as possible, while allowing me to explore certain aspects of their stories through targeted questions. This approach is consistent with the recommendations of Beerkens et al. (2012, pp. 26-29), which propose structuring the conversation to progress from an introductory phase, to the central discussion, a deeper exploration of the recounted subjects, and finally, to a reexamination of key points.

Parts I and II are further broken into two sections each, whilst part III is separated into three sections. Section A of Part I focused on comprehending the background of the artistic practice and, by extension, the individuals involved in it. In Part I, section B, the focus was on comprehending the participant' self-perceived

positionality and motives in regard to their practicing. Part II was centered on probing the participant's view of their experience of the city and its transformation at two distinct levels: in Section A, a *city-wide level*, pertaining to their broader relationship with Bologna and its context-specific features. These features emerged from the participants' descriptions of their experiences, but encompassed geographical, physical, historical, social, cultural, political, economic, and affective dimensions across all accounts; and in Section B, a *site-specific level*, which revolved around their interactions with specific urban sites within the city, in relation to their artistic practicing.

The core of the interview was Part III, section A, which involved a comprehensive exchange on the intentionality and sanctioning of the urban art-work, specifically in respect to the interaction with changing site specificities, at the site-level. In Part III, section B, the questions pertained to the efficacy of the art-work within the city, insisting on the site-level. In Part III, section C, the investigation shifted to examine the effectiveness of the participant's artistic practicing within the city, this time considering the city-level perspective.

Given the semi-structured nature of the interviews, I often did not systematically pose questions in a predetermined sequence. Instead, I adapted them to follow the pace of the conversation with the artists, occasionally bringing in additional questions spontaneously, particularly when exploring the art-making process. However, at times, I employed a more structured approach to maintain a coherent comparative perspective. During the conversation, I also tried to rephrase questions to allow participants to understand them in a language that was more familiar and that made more sense to them, depending on what was emerging from our exchange.

Demographic questions were also included to acquire additional information on the participants. I usually collected this data after the interview, in written format, and only occasionally at the beginning.

Conducting interviews in one's native language may facilitate more natural and nuanced communication, potentially leading to deeper insights and better rapport building, positively impacting the quality of the data collected. To ensure effective communication with the participants, I decided to conduct interviews in Bologna using the Italian language, which is my native language, as well as the spoken language of all of the individuals recruited for this study. Consequently, the interview questions were crafted in this language. However, in this manuscript, I chose utilized the English language to report the interview guideline questions as well as the textual data that I have gathered (e.g., interview transcripts).

The in-depth semi-structured interview questions are laid out in Table 6, which organizes them into thematic parts and sections, as described above. I categorized the questions as guiding questions, follow-up questions, and a concise statement of their underlying rationale, in relation to the subject matter and research questions of this study.

Additionally, I have accompanied each question with my personal observations and reflections on the average response of participants – in brackets. I

primarily derived these observations from personal field notes recorded after each interview, from a comprehensive review of transcriptions, as well as from memos.

Guiding questions	**Follow-up questions**	**Rationale**
Part I, Section A: ***Understanding the background of the practice***		
Tell me how your practice started.	When did you start? Where did you start? What were the initial projects? What were the difficulties? What was unexpected?	*Background of the practice*
[This initial prompt was easily understood and well-received by all participants, yielding a rich informative panorama about the background of their artistic practice, as well as their formal or informal training as artists. In some cases, particularly with participants who had extensive public visibility and were accustomed to giving journalistic or curatorial interviews, their response to this question corresponded to statements or narratives already made public (for example, in monographic publications or online, on the artists' websites or social media platforms).]		
Part I, Section B: ***Understanding the participant' self-perceived positionality and motives in relation to their practice***		
How would you describe your practice?	What is its purpose? Does it belong to an artistic genre? Which one? How does it position itself in relation to the urban public art scene?	*Positionality of the practice*
[This question typically prompted moments of reflection from the participant, which appeared in stark contrast to the fluidity of the narratives that followed in response to the question in Part I, Section A. In any case, it provided insight into the particular position of the participant's practice in the Bolognese urban and non-urban art 'worlds'.]		
Generally, what motivates or drives your creative intentions?	Where does your project/work start from? *(response to tender, individual will, ...)* What sustains it over time?	*Motives of the practice*
[This question also opened up particularly reflective scenarios. However, most participants tended to provide a particularly concise and declarative account of the motivations underlying their artistic practice – or, in other words, one or more specific 'objects' of focal interest in their art-making in urban space. Throughout the interview, I recalled this question several times using different formulations, especially during the discussion of specific art-works, in Part II, Section B, and Part III.]		
Part II, Section A: ***Understanding the participant's relationship with the city, at city-level, via self-perception***		

Let's focus now on the city where we are. What made you choose to work in Bologna?	 What is it like to work here? What makes your work easier? What makes it complicated?	*Choice of city in relation to the practice*
[This question was easily understood and generally elicited straightforward and unambiguous responses, such as 'I live here' or 'I studied here.' It was also interesting to observe that, in almost all interviews, the initial reaction to this more 'personal' question was a smile or laughter from the participant, in stark contrast to their reactions to the previous questions.]		
What are the specificities of Bologna?	What kind are they? *Material (physical) or immaterial (social, political, cultural) ...* Can you give an example?	*City specificities*
[For several participants, this question seemed more difficult to understand. In some cases, especially when the participant responded with 'what do you mean?' I chose to replace the term 'specificity' with 'identity' or 'characteristics,' in an attempt to clarify the focus of the question. Usually, even in these cases, the question elicited a broad and diversified range of narratives about 'their' Bologna.]		
How are the recent changes in this city transforming its specificities?	What did you notice changing? Can you give an example?	*Change in city specificities*
[This question was understood and often even anticipated by the participants in articulating their response to the question about the perceived specificities of Bologna. Various concrete examples emerged spontaneously during the conversation, without the need for further prompting.]		
How have those changes affected, or affect, your practice since you started?	How was your practice before, compared to what it is now? What's different? What has remained the same?	*Impact of change in city specificities on the practice*
[This question was easily understood. In recounting what was 'different from before,' the narratives of multiple participants tended to evoke salient moments from the background of their practice, in this case also referring to specific art-works, and particularly to specific stages of their creation. In some cases, a sense of frustration seemed to emerge from the participant in response to the question. I often drew upon the information that emerged at this point in the interview to elicit, in Part II, Section B, and Part III, accounts related to specific moments of CPs.]		
(if relevant) Thinking of other cities where you've worked in, how does working in Bologna compare to those experiences?	 What are the affinities? What are the differences?	*Comparison of practice with work in other cities*
[This question was posed only to participants whose practices had produced art-works (particularly iterations discussed during the interview) in contexts other than Bologna or Italy. It was generally received by participants with openness and a desire to compare their experience in Bologna with that in other contexts; the accounts of these experiences seemed to be, in a few narratives, more engaging for the participant than the ones focusing solely on the Bolognese context.]		
Part II, Section B: ***Understanding the participant's relationship with the city, at site-level, via the action***		

Now let's consider a particular site in the city that you've been working in. You mentioned your project/work *[art-work]* in *[urban location]* …	*Art-works/urban locations to be discussed:* *[listed here]*	*Choice of the action/site*
What made you choose to work on that particular site?	Have you considered other sites as well?	
[Taking into account information emerging from the interview conducted up to this point, this question/prompt began by recalling those specific art-works and their respective sites in Bologna that I had already identified with the participant during the access meeting. It is worth noting that in some interviews this question was asked following the account regarding the background of the artist's practice. I did this to not interrupt the flow of the participants' narratives, returning to temporarily ignored questions later. In various accounts, the participant tended to recall, in response to the reasons for choosing the site, the motivations behind their artistic practice.]		
At the time, what did you know about the past of that site?	How did you find out about it? How do you remember it?	*Ties to and knowledge of the site's temporality*
[As in previous questions, this question was easily understood and generally elicited direct and unambiguous responses, ranging from 'absolutely nothing' to detailed accounts of the participant's personal experience of the site in question.]		
What are the specificities of that site?	What kind are they? *Material (physical) or immaterial (social, political, cultural) …* Can you give an example?	*Site specificities*
[Contrary to the responses obtained from participants in the question about the specificities of Bologna, this question was usually easily understood and sometimes even anticipated within the account of the site selection process. However, at this level, participants tended to have more difficulty recalling specific examples of what they perceived as specific about that site, requiring further prompting.]		
How have the specificities of that site changed over time (in relation to the changes in Bologna)?	How do the two differ? In what do they converge?	*Change in site specificities and their relationship with the city*
[Most participants seemed to have difficulty understanding this question and its purpose, tending to recall information already provided in response to the question about the changing specificities of Bologna as a whole. It was interesting to note that this question seemed to be better understood, or at least more openly received, by those artists who predominantly used street art or installation art as art forms in their practice. The concrete examples that emerged tended to focus predominantly on the materiality of the site, recalling temporal interactions between the artist, the site, and the discussed art-work.]		
Part III, Section A: ***Intentionality and sanctioning of the action, interaction with changing site specificities, at site-level***		

Let us now try to reconstruct the creative process for that project/work. At the beginning of the creative process, what was your first approach to that site?	From/with what did you start working? How? How did the condition you found that site affected your creative intentions?	*Interaction with condition of the site and* *Constitution of the action's features*
[Depending on how the conversation unfolded up to this point in the interview, this question was posed interchangeably with one of the follow-up questions, almost always reformulating/adapting the query. In almost all cases, however, the question initiated moments of deep reflection, an attitude that generally permeated and persisted throughout the rest of the interview until its conclusion.]		
How has the materiality of that site affected your creative intentions?	Its… *Objects? Bodies? Colors? Buildings? Urban morphologies?* …	*Interaction with materialities*
How has the daily life of that site affected your creative intentions?	Its… *Interactions? Movements? Stories? Experiences? Meanings? Institutions?* …	*Interaction with immaterialities*
[These two questions (whose observations I have combined) tended to intersect with each other during the conversation, as did the participants' accounts. In general, these questions elicited a variety of narratives that touched upon intentions, decision-making processes, and practical actions related to the creation of the art-work.]		
To what extent is this approach typical of your work?	How repeatable is it (in relation to other sites, or projects/works)?	*Recurrence of intentionality*
[This question was understood in various ways by the participants, being more welcomed by those artists who had created or reiterated the artworks discussed in other sites in Bologna and elsewhere. However, it tended to recontextualize, albeit marginally, the discussion related to the micro-level of 'making' the art-work within the broader narrative of the participant's artistic practice.]		
How would you describe the goal of that project/work?	How was *[is]* determined? To what extent was *[is]* made explicit? What was *[is]* his audience?	*Statement of intents*
[From this point in the interview onwards, the questions were reformulated differently depending on whether the participants were talking about an art-work created in the past, in the ideation or creation phase, or planned for the future at the time of the interview. This question was generally understood and tended to lead participants to talk about the underlying motivations of the specific art-work discussed, as well as to reflect together with me on the reasons - the 'why' - behind these motivations.]		
How was the project/work *[is]* presented [communicated, or promoted] in relation to your initial creative intentions?	To what extent did your communication refer *[makes reference]* to the particular condition of the chosen site?	*Presentation of the action's features – to site*
[This question was, in most cases, immediately followed by the corresponding follow-up question. Although understood by the majority of participants, in some cases, the term 'presented' was unclear.		

Therefore, if needed, I decided to replace this term with 'communicated' or 'promoted.' Generally, the question prompted participants to talk about how and through which means the art-work was communicated to the public throughout the CP, both during its creation and in the phase of realization or performance.]		
What were *[are]* your expectations of that project/work?	What determined *[determines]* these expectations? How open or flexible were *[are]* them?	*Endorsement of the action's features*
[This question was easily understood and often anticipated by the participants while they articulated their account in response to the question about presenting the art-work.]		
How have *[are]* expectations changed *[changing]* over time?	To what extent has their change led to *[can lead to]* a change in the project/work?	*Change in expectations to action's features*
[This question was also easily understood, and participants typically talked about their experience of the changes that occurred over time in their art-work, often discussing how these changes interfaced with the underlying motivations of both the art-work itself and their overall practice.]		
Can you tell me how the project/work was *[will be]* realized?	How long did *[will]* it take? Who participated *[will participate]*?	*Statement of enactment of the action's features*
[This question was often anticipated by participants as part of their accounts regarding the goals of the art-work, as well as the changing expectations in light of its realization or performance. However, the question seemed to be particularly relevant in those cases where the discussed art-work was still in the ideation phase – that is, when the question was posed in its 'will be' formulation.]		
How has your approach to the chosen site and its specificities evolved *[do you imagine it will evolve]* while you created *[you will create]* the project/work?	What have you noticed change *[what do you think might change]*? Can you give an example?	*Change in interaction with the site during enactment of the action*
[This question was understood in various ways by the participants, requiring more effort in those cases where the discussed art-work was still in the ideation phase. In these cases, the participant was asked to imagine a possible evolution of their approach to the site over time through their artistic intervention. In all other cases, responses to this question tended to draw from accounts related to the changing initial expectations following the realization or performance of the art-work, often providing detailed examples.]		
Part III, Section B: *Efficacy on the city, at site-level, via the action*		
How did your project/work affect *[could affect]* that site?	What role did it play *[will it play]* in that site? To what extent it could have changed *[could change]* that site and its specificities?	*Reflection on functional role of action on site's change*
[This question was easily understood and positively received by the participants, stimulating moments of critically reflective thought about their own work in most cases. Often, the participants' reaction to the question would result in a smile or a laugh.]		

What has remained *[could remain]* of the project/work?	How do you relate to the traces your project/work leaves? To what extent can they be maintained or preserved?	*Reflection on conservation of action's traces on site*
[This question was easily understood, and in most cases, the responses provided by the participants tended to recall accounts related to the public presentation of the artwork, with a particular focus on aspects of documenting the artwork over time, its evolution, and their own artistic work - albeit varied in terms of methods and value attributed to the documentation process.]		
Part III, Section C: *Efficacy on the city, at city-level, via self-perception*		
Now let's go back to the city level. How does your practice/work participate in the changes of the city?	What usually gives you a measure of your presence as a practice in Bologna? *(social recognition, recognition of the community of peers, ...)*	*Reflection on functional role of practice on city change and Recognition of practice*
[The observations made for the first question in Part III, Section B can also be repeated for this question. In general, participants expressed critical reflections, revealing a general tendency towards skepticism, with some cases showing evident pessimism regarding the results and effectiveness of their artistic practice within the Bolognese context.]		
Summary and closure		
Thank you so much for taking the time to tell me about your work. Is there anything else you want to add?		*Closure*
[This final remark was generally met with surprise by the participants; in some cases, participants showed a sense of relief, while in others, at the conclusion of the interview, they thanked for the questions asked. In most cases, however, they did not feel the need to add further information to the conversation. Nevertheless, upon the conclusion of the audio recording, additional relevant information spontaneously emerged during our farewell exchanges. I took written notes of these information after the meeting.]		

Table 6: The semi-structured interview guideline and questions, with observations on the response to each question.

3.2.5 Visual ethnography

Following the semi-structured interviews conducted with the larger sample, I explored the CP of 8 art-works of three particular case studies of UAP (see Subsection 3.1.3) through the conduction of a *visual ethnography* (Pink, 2020).

Aligning with anthropologist Sarah Pink, my understanding of visual ethnography in the context of this research concerns the use of specific *visual methods* in an ethnographic practice, that is, within a *documentary* practice.

The methodological approach of ethnography, in itself, allows us to document, describe, interpret, experience, and empirically represent cultures and

societies through practices of exposure and, above all, long-term participation in these very realities. Through the use of various forms of visual representation, this approach allows us to reflectively reconsider the relationship between the world of which we have experience and the production of knowledge through visual materials. Furthermore, "visuals are data. They are also tools to gather and record data. Visuals are not, for symbolic interactionists or interpretivists, things that should be removed from their social context in the process of analysis. [...] Visuals can add a layer of depth to our analysis, can offer patterns for analysis, if we attend to them" (van den Scott, 2018, p.721).

I believe it is worth quoting Pink here to clarify one of the fundamental reasons that drove me to use this approach in the context of my interdisciplinary study, namely the close relationship – perhaps now common sense, but I believe never taken for granted – between artistic practice (including architecture, the discipline in which I was trained) and ethnographic practice, particularly that which addresses images and visible artifacts, as well as everything concerning their production and reception. "The relationship between arts practices and visual ethnography is a two-way process; while visual ethnographic practices can inform [artistic] representations, the visual practices of […] artists also provide new and inspiring examples for visual ethnographers" (Pink, 2020, p.2). This is a fundamental realization which, interestingly, also emerged across all the narratives of the artists who took part in this study, as I will discuss later in the empirical chapters. Therefore, I considered that the in-depth analysis of a *specific* artistic practice (here, the UAP) required the use of a *specific* approach that was akin – if not even 'internal' – to that same practice: the ethnographic-anthropological attitude, that is, studying *with* and learning *from* people – or together *with* them, as reminded by Ingold (2019, p.15) – and the relationship with images and their processes of meaning-making – or, more generally put, with visual culture. Moreover, adopting a perspective that regards the researcher-person together as an *instrument* and an *active participant* whose subjectivity contributes to the investigation of reality, I found this approach to be well-aligned with my existing skill set. These skills have been honed over years of training and professional experience in the realms of the visual arts and architectural design, with a specific focus on the urban public environment. As ethnography, and particularly the use of visuals in its practice, is only "an *aspect* of research and representation" that is not confined solely to the social sciences or anthropology, as Pink reminds us (2020, p.8, emphasis in original), "different disciplinary uses of it are likely to situate ethnography differently within their processes of research and representation". Therefore, ethnography is combined and conducted with distinct disciplinary skill sets and attitudes.

During this portion of my fieldwork, the focus of the investigation was represented by the *visual documents*, or documentation, produced by the artists of the three UAPs during the making of their urban art-works – whatever form these visuals took (video, photos, drawings, etc.). It is worth specifying here that by 'documents' I refer to data sources that, in a qualitative study, differ from interviews

and observations but can nevertheless be part of and/or a product of their conduction. In this case, these were documents existing in a visual format; or in other words, *visual images*.

More precisely, aligning with the definition used by Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p.139), I chose the term 'document' as an "umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study at hand."

In my case, the documents simultaneously represented a mean and an end, respectively as visual representations used to elicit information (through SRIs and, subsequently, through visual analysis of the documents themselves), and collected as – metaphorically speaking – a 'still image' of processes (when pre-existing, created by the artists during the CPs of their art-works) or observations (when *ex novo*, created by me during or following participant observations). This particular understanding of the visual document emerged and subsequently developed as part of the social relations and activities engaged in during the fieldwork, rather than *a priori*.

Accordingly, the ethnography was articulated through a combination of three distinct yet mutually reinforcing qualitative techniques, or visual methods: (1) *collection of pre-existing visual documentation*, in the form of participant-generated visual material/images (PGI),[34] together with (2) the participant's verbal description of the PGI, in the form of loosely structured *stimulated recall interviews* (SRI) sessions; and (3) *participant observations,* with researcher-generated visual material/images (RGI) produced through the observations.

To this purpose, I focused on collecting three types of visual documents (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.140) related to the art-works and their CPs: (i) PGI as *personal* documents, existing prior to the research and privately owned by the artist; (ii) PGI as *popular culture* documents, or public records of the UAP, found on their social media pages and public websites; and (iii) RGI documents encompassing all documents not originally present in the research setting and created by me, in the role of researcher, after the study had commenced, particularly during participant observations.

Overall, my rationale for adopting this approach stemmed from the belief that a systematic and interconnected collection and analysis of visual documents pertaining to the urban art-work making ('what has been *done*' by the artist), in conjunction with the semi-structured interviews ('what has been *said*' by the artist), and understood as 'creative' data *per se*, could provide a deeper understanding *about* how perceived changes in urban environments impact the creation of the urban art-work itself, i.e., its CP. My hypothesis was that within both these specific verbal stories and visual representations I could glean insights into their experience of how their city – Bologna, the city in which they practice – has transformed over time.

[34] I use the term 'participant-generated visual material/images' – abbreviated as PGI – to denote the pre-existing material that artists had created during the production of their art-works, which could be located in their archives or were publicly accessible. I am not referring to visuals produced by participants after being assigned a task, such as in photo-voice or similar qualitative methods.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that while textual and visual data were collected and utilized together, I did not consider them as interchangeable or identical. Instead, I understood them as interconnected yet distinct components of data, each possessing its complexity and qualitative differences. This acknowledgement is reflected in the methods I have selected for data analysis (see Section 4.1). Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that the collected data does not offer a direct or objective portrayal of reality. Instead, it predominantly reflects the participants' interpretation of their subjective experience – which is, nevertheless, what my study (and most qualitative research) was seeking.

This understanding was precisely one of the reasons why the exploration of the urban art-work's CP through visual documents was framed within the conduction of *stimulated recall interview sessions* (Dempsey, 2010), i.e., through verbal exchanges. SRI, as a method, provides crucial support to participants in articulating their thoughts and processes more effectively than approaches relying solely on their ability to retrospectively recall key moments in their artistic practicing. This method is particularly advantageous when studying the cognitive processes of experts. Indeed, "the technique of SRI brings informants a step closer to the moments in which they actually produce action. It gives them the chance to listen or view themselves in action, jog memories, and give answers of 'I did,' instead of 'I might have'" (Dempsey, 2010).

In my ethnography, SRIs took the form of loosely structured retrospective discussions with the participants. They also had the aim of gathering the participant's verbal description of the PGI that was simultaneously been collected. During these discussions, I prompted the artists to elaborate on various aspects of the CP by looking at the visual documents that were in front of us (both still and moving images), talking about how the specific art-work came into existence and analyzing the emerging of its features in relation to the urban location in which it was situated – or would be situated. Furthermore, I encouraged participants to reflect in depth about the rationale behind their practical choices and their interaction with the site's features. Typically, the visuals were presented by the artists both digitally on screens of phones or computers, and physically in the form of drawings, sketches, models, prototypes, and so forth.

A significant portion of this visual material was situated at the artist's studio, which, in almost all instances, also served as the backdrop for our meetings, sessions, and interviews. After each SRI session, I asked the participants to share with me the visual documentation (see Subsections 3.2.6 and 3.2.7).

Engaging artists in reflective discussions facilitated by the use of visual materials also helped in situating their reflections and perceptions within their unique creative context. This approach ensured that the insights gathered during the ethnography were not solely dependent, on one hand, on my interpretation of the PGI, and on the other hand, on the artists' memory. Consequently, it led to a more comprehensive and contextually rich understanding of their CPs and underlying motivations.

It is important to note here that, although I collected a substantial amount of visual documentation for each individual art-work of every UAP case study involved in the visual ethnography, I found that not all participants were accustomed, in their practicing, to producing visual material as a means of articulating (or 'working on') their art-works. Indeed, in some cases the artists preferred to produce textual material – such as a narrative, or a script, etc. In other instances, extensive conversations and verbal exchanges with other members of their practice were the sole method of work utilized. In these cases, the 'images' related to the art-work were primarily produced and used for its promotion or public communication. This realization inevitably challenged a preconception I initially held when approaching the field. Therefore, I felt that it was necessary to integrate the collection of key textual material produced by the artists alongside the visual documentation.

As previously mentioned, the visual ethnography also comprised the use of *participant observations*. The primary objective of this method was to witness and document the CPs underlying the artists' actions during the art-work making. This encompassed the ethnographic observation of the 'natural' behavior of individuals and spatial elements of the context, meaning their artistic creation and their interaction with the designated sites, particularly during the execution or realization of their work at those specific location. Furthermore, these observations served the dual purpose of triangulating the data obtained from the interviews with the artists (both semi-structured and SRIs), as well as from the collected visual documentation, while also allowing me to immerse myself in the field, encompassing the exploration of relevant urban locations in Bologna and the intricate networks of relationships within and across the studied artistic practices – their "art worlds" (Becker, 1982). This immersion enabled me to attain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and nuances at play, shifting the focus from what was told to 'things in the making'.

Throughout the visual ethnography, I considered the *setting* surrounding data elicitation and collection inseparable from the data itself. Indeed, the setting is not merely a backdrop but an 'active participant' in shaping the data collected. In this study, the setting encompasses at least three crucial aspects: (1) the creation of the visual document; (2) the visual document's inherent content – its "internal narrative" (Banks, 2001) – which refers to the narrative within the document itself, in this case regarding the creation process of the art-work; and (3) the interaction of this visual document with its audience, which refers to its "external narrative" (Banks, 2001) – essentially, the social context and relationships that influence both the creation and interpretation of the document. In this regard, my positionality and reflexivity, meaning how I approached, was impacted by, and had interpreted the visual document, were deemed crucial during both data collection and analysis. Furthermore, oftentimes the setting overlapped with the actual location where the visual material was kept, such as the artist's archives and their studio. In this regard, my approach aligns with those of scholars such as Pink (2020), Rose (2001), and Guillemin (2004), who emphasize the significance of understanding and integrating

these contextual dimensions within both the collection and the analysis of visual data. In accordance with my overall research methodological design, I considered several settings of data collection, particularly:

- *The city of Bologna*, considered empirically in terms of its metropolitan area and its municipality;
- *Bologna's 'urban art-worlds,'* encompassing the local social contexts and interconnected networks, both informal (individual networks of peers, resources) and institutional (cultural organizations, funding bodies, discourses) in which the artists were situated and practiced;
- *The artist's 'studio*,' the physical location where the artist usually operates, within Bologna;
- *The artist's online public profile,* the online digital public platforms (such as the artist's website or social media profiles) where the artist usually publishes or promotes their work;
- *The urban site (or sites) of the art-work*, specific locations where the art-work is situated, created, and/or performed, within Bologna.

In the following subsection, I will present the protocol developed to conduct the visual ethnography in all its components.

As stated in the introduction of this section, I conducted visual ethnography (at least for the most part) a few months after completing the semi-structured interviews with the entire sample. However, in employing each of the methods discussed until here, I did not adhere to a chronological order or a phase-by-phase approach. Instead, all the components of the ethnography took place concurrently during fieldwork, alternating between and thereby informing one another.

3.2.6 Visual documentation, SRI sessions and observation procedures

The portion of fieldwork in Bologna during which I conducted the visual ethnography lasted for six months, specifically from the beginning of July 2023 to the end of January 2024. However, due to the diverse temporal nature of the observed phenomenon, I conducted participant observations concurrently with the semi-structured interviews, starting November 2022. Nevertheless, the observations intensified during the period of visual ethnography.

SRIs and Collection of visual documentation

Each SRI session lasted approximately 90 minutes to 120 minutes. The session typically took place at the artist's studio. As I did for the semi-structured interviews, I recorded each interview using a tape recorder to aid in analysis. I conducted a total of 3 SRI.

Pre-session steps were:

1. Scheduling and Screening: I contacted the artist or artists, via e-mail or telephone, to arrange a follow-up meeting, corresponding to the SRI session, covering its date, time, and location. During this communication, I provided a detailed explanation of the rationale, purpose, and significance of the session. This explanation emphasized and recalled the specific art-works to be discussed, and clarified the intended use of the visual documentation, ensuring that the artists comprehend the research aims.

   It was crucial, during this communication, to inquire about the availability of visual material related to the art-work's CP. To this purpose, I asked participants: (1) to specify if visual material was produced in the making of their art-works, and what types of documents were created; (2) to express their willingness to share and discuss these documents during the session; and, if agreed, (3) to gather and arrange relevant documents among said visual material in preparation for the session, according to the artist's discretion.
2. Preparation: I undertook a comprehensive review (re-immersion) of the semi-structured interview transcriptions pertaining to the specific artist or artists scheduled for the upcoming session. Particular attention was given to re-familiarizing with the details surrounding the art-works designated for discussion during the session.

   A new ICF was drafted, to be signed by the participant at the beginning of the session.
3. Equipment: I checked and readied the essential equipment and tools. This included ensuring the functionality and availability of a tape recorder, a notebook, and a camera to facilitate the recording and documentation of the session.

Following this, during-session steps were:

1. Introduction: I started the session by re-establishing rapport with the artist or artists, and by reiterating the purpose of the research.
2. Consent: I asked the artist or artists to provide signed consent for recording and participation before the data was collected, using the newly drafted ICF.
3. Eliciting, probing questions and discussion: I started the session by posing one main open-ended probing question-task to verify the visual documentation produced during the CP:

   Could you show me and describe which material you have produced in creating this art-work?

As the artist or artists presented and described the visual material, I employed a series of non-directive prompts to deepen and focus the conversation regarding the art-work's CP:

i.	**Definition of the CP, in terms of processuality and start/end**
	Do you perceive a beginning and an end to this art-work? Let's talk about each. *How is the beginning? How is the end?* *When did you feel it start? When did you feel it end?*
ii.	**Perceived characteristics of the CP**
	What shape does this process have? (e.g., linear; branching; etc...)
iii.	**Placing of visual documentation within the CP**
	Which of these materials represents the beginning of this art-work? Which represents the end (if present)? Let's try to position the material at various moments in the process.
iv.	**Exploration of the interactions of the CP with the artist's experience of the changes of Bologna and the art-work's specific urban site**
	Could you show me and describe which of this material, in your opinion, best represents the relationship between the art-work and how you perceived the change in its site/in Bologna?

Table 7: SRI's prompts.

This probing phase aimed to progressively pinpoint and concentrate on those visual documents that were particularly associated with the connection between specific phases or occurrences within the CP and the perceived changes in the city/site. The prompts did not follow a predetermined structure. Rather, they adapted to the conversation, allowing for an organic exploration based on the flow of the dialogue, and particularly on the information provided by the participants.

Across all SRI sessions, the discussion probed four levels and their respective sub-levels concerning the art-work's CP. As creative processes are, usually, iterative rather than linear, these levels and sub-levels represented, session after session, a loose unstructured 'guideline' to prompt new questions steering the discussion toward exploring different aspects of the art-work and 'movements' within its creation. This approach mitigated the preemptive attribution of phased or goal-oriented structures to CPs in artistic practices, as such attributions could potentially arise in retrospective studies of artistic creation (see Zembylas and Niederauer, 2017). It provided a framework for navigating through this step in the SRI session. The prompts were also sensitive of insights from the initial semi-structured interview with the artist. The four levels were:

Levels of CP:

i. *Art-work's inception*: Origin of the art-work, encompassing initial concepts, designs, drafts, models, etc;
ii. *Art-work's sanction*: Intended public conveyance/presentation of the art-work, in relation to its inception;
iii. *Art-work's enactment*: Execution/performance of the art-work, or variations/different versions of the art-work;

iv. *Art-work's temporality*: Duration, deterioration, conservation, and documentation of the art-work.

Sub-levels of CP:

i. *Art-forms*: Genres and classifications of artistic expression, such as painting, sculpture, installation, performance, digital art, or mixed media;
ii. *Appearance*: Visual attributes encompassing color palettes, shapes, textures, dimensions, spatial arrangements, and stylistic characteristics defining the art-work's aesthetic presentation;
iii. *Features*: Identifiable components or elements within the art-work that contribute to its distinctiveness, including motifs, symbols, or thematic elements;
iv. *Materials and techniques*: Specific tools, mediums, materials, or methodologies employed in creating the art-work;
v. *Uses/functions*: Intended purpose, functionality, or intended impact of the art-work;
vi. *Tangible aspects*: Physical components, equipment, or tangible elements directly associated with the art-work's creation, execution, or performance;
vii. *Intangible aspects*: Non-physical or immersive elements evoking sensory experiences, interactivity, emotional connections, or atmospheric ambiance linked to the art-work;
viii. *Meaning and significance*: Interpretative layers, conceptual depth, symbolic meanings, cultural references, or emotional narratives intentionally attached to the art-work's concept, materials, or techniques;
ix. *Context of production*: Broader contextual factors surrounding the creation of the art-work, encompassing the artist's broader body of work, historical or cultural influences, socio-political themes, or personal narratives;
x. *Instruction/requirements for conveyance*: Guidelines, protocols, or rules sanctioned by the artist, dictating how the art-work should be presented or displayed to the public, influencing its visual presentation, interaction, or accessibility;
xi. *Instruction/requirements for execution/performance*: Conditions, directives, or specifications influencing the execution, realization, or live enactment of the art-work, shaping its form or adaptability;
xii. *Documentation process*: Systematic methods, techniques, or approaches employed by the artist to chronicle and document distinct phases, changes, or significant aspects of the art-work's evolution or creation process.

Participant observations

In accordance with my overall research methodology, during the participant observations I focused on three primary areas of ethnographic observation. These areas were mainly guided by the temporal variables which I previously considered as a selection criterion for the UAPs under investigation (see Subsection 3.1.2), as

well as by the artists' accounts of their work. The observation of these three areas primarily centered on social interactions and aspects of material culture.

The first area of observation (1) centered on examining how the artists, or other individuals associated with their artistic practice, initiated and developed an art-work. This observation primarily revolved around the CPs involved in their work and took place either at their studio or at the particular site of the art-work. Closely related is the second area of observation (2) which pertained to understanding how the artists intended to bring a pre-planned art-work to fruition. This area also included art-works that, ultimately, were never brought to a 'material' realization. Lastly, the third area of observation (3) focused on the actual execution by the artist of a previously planned art-work within a chosen site. It is essential to acknowledge that these three areas of observation often exhibited significant overlap. For example, the execution of a mural on a particular wall was witnessed and later understood as coinciding with the initial CP, much like an ideational occurrence. This interpretation stemmed from the fact that, to continue with the example provided here, the artist did not create any preparatory sketches or illustrations before arriving at the site and beginning to paint the wall, blurring the distinction between the creative inception and the actual realization of the art-work. Conversely, when observing a walking performance, I construed it as the execution phase of the art-work alone. In that case, my interpretation was grounded in the understanding that the planning and production of the performance had occurred at an earlier time.

In total, I conducted 12 participant observations. During these observations, I adopted the role of an internal observer, while also documenting through ethnographic notes, sketches, photos and videos (counting as RGI), and occasionally engaging in discussions with the artists to gain insight into the CP either during or after the observation. Across all observations, I maintained full transparency about my identity as a researcher, ensuring that the artists were informed about the purpose and nature of the observations during our initial access meeting. The observations occurred in both the participants' 'studios,' and in various urban locations interested by the artists' art-works (see Subsection 3.1.2).

To this purpose, to contextualize the observations described thus far, as well as the data collected through interviews and SRIs, I concurrently observed, from a diachronic perspective, the urban and architectural transformations of the urban locations under examination, as well as the city of Bologna as a whole. This involved focusing on visible elements of urban change. By considering this aspect, I aimed to establish connections – without any justificatory, comparative, or validation intent – between the narratives (verbal and visual) of the participants and the tangible, physical dimension of the city and the dissemination of its visible signs of change. Some of these observations involved my physical presence in various sites of interest, using textual notes, sketches, photos, and videos. However, other observations were conducted through a desk-based approach, following the technique proposed by Hwang and Sampson (2014). This technique entailed comparing still images (street-level panoramas) from Google Street View,

encompassing both past (earliest images on the platform dating back to 2008) and recent images.

Although I managed to observe a substantial portion, in terms of CP's development, of the art-works that had already been created at various sites in Bologna, it is worth noting here that only a limited number of artists who were included in the visual ethnography were observed *in actu*, that is, during their art-making processes. Several factors contributed to this limitation. At times, no art-works were in the inception phase during my engagement with the participants. Additionally, some artists had limited availability, and logistical challenges occasionally hindered the setup of observational sessions. In certain rare instances, communication between the artists and myself came to a halt, either for an extended period or entirely. While the observations were not the primary instruments in my inquiry – given its predominantly retrospective nature – it is evident that this aspect of the study represents a limitation, as it restricted the depth of insight I could gain into the artistic processes and experiences of some participants. However, I argue that this limitation could also suggest a potential avenue for future research, such as in the scenario of a longitudinal study involving the investigation of one single practice (see Subsection 5.2.4).

3.2.7 Data management and storing

As a whole, the data collected during the fieldwork comprised:

- 28 hours and 30 minutes of audio recordings from the in-depth semi-structured interviews and the SRIs (average duration 2 hours per interview and SRI);
- 520 pages (average pages 37 per document) from the transcriptions;
- 1600 visual items, primarily consisting of still images (such as photographs, drawings, illustrations, etc.), along with moving images (such as videos), both PGI and RGI;
- 30 textual documents (approximately), PGI.

I *verbatim* transcribed the audio recordings of each interview and SRI session in their entirety, preserving all momentary pauses, hesitations, and uncertainties, while excluding most non-word vocalized sounds commonly used as fillers (e.g., 'uhm'). Given the substantial volume of recorded hours, the audio recordings of the interviews underwent a two-step transcription process: firstly, (1) I used the automated AI transcription services Descript[35] and Rev[36] to generate a draft transcription, with approximately 90% accuracy. Secondly, (2) I conducted a thorough review of the transcription's texts by reading them multiple times while listening to the original recordings, addressing inaccuracies, typos, missing

[35] Descript website. https://www.descript.com/
[36] Rev website. https://www.rev.com/

information, and other discrepancies. This second step often marked the initial stage of my familiarization with the data.

The entirety of the collected data, including transcriptions, field notes, written documents, and visual materials, underwent analysis and interpretation utilizing a triangulation of the analysis methods of *Iterative Thematic Inquiry* (ITI; Morgan and Nica, 2020) and *Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis* (SVTA; Brown and Collins, 2021). I will provide a comprehensive description of the data analysis process in Chapter 4.

I conducted both transcription and subsequent analysis of interviews and SRIs using the languages in which they were originally carried out and recorded, i.e., Italian. Only selected transcript excerpts were translated from Italian into English.

Prior to beginning the analysis phase, I took the additional step of sharing the transcriptions with the participants via e-mail. This member-checking process (Mero-Jaffe, 2011) was implemented to ensure the accuracy and fidelity of the data, allowing participants to review, edit, validate, dismiss or add to their contributions to the study. It is worth noting that not all participants provided responses to the transcripts. This lack of response could be attributed to various factors, including the potential burden placed on the participants or a sense of embarrassment or discomfort associated with responding to their transcribed interviews (Mero-Jaffe, 2011).

The visual documentation, overall, consisted of PGI and RGI. Regarding the visual documentation generated by the participants, this was shared on-site at the end of each SRI session, either in digital format (transferred onto my USB drive from the participants' computer) or in physical format (such as paper sheets, photographs, or various artifacts). Alternatively, I requested the documentation at a later time, via email. In this case, upon agreement with the participant, I asked them to upload the discussed documentation in digitized form to a cloud drive (e.g., Google Drive), exclusively shared with and accessible to them.

As for the visual documentation generated by me during, for example, participant observations, this primarily consisted of photographs, videos, and drawings. At the end of each observation, I collected this material into a digital storage device (an external hard drive and/or a cloud drive, owned and exclusively accessed by me) or, in the case of physical material, into a document folder.

I digitized all the visual documentation that existed in physical form (via scans, photographs, or textual rewrites) and stored it on the hard drive of my work computer, exclusively accessed by me. Subsequently, I organized all the digital files into folders and subfolders related to each of the studied UAPs, as well as to each identified art-work. For each art-work, I created subfolders containing the different types of material, namely visual, textual, audio, and renamed each file with a concise description of its content. During the management and storage phases, I made no modifications or alterations to the content of the visual documentation.

I took every precaution to ensure data confidentiality throughout the whole data management and storing process.

Chapter 4 – Data analysis and findings

"A work takes many forms and the 'work itself' is isolated only by virtue of a collective act of definition. This means that what the work is, while in no way arbitrary, is subject to great variation and can never be settled definitively in some way that is dictated by its physical nature." (Becker et al., 2006, p.24)

Introduction and chapter outline

In this chapter, I present the results of the research, along with a detailed and thorough discussion of the data analysis process. The chapter is divided into four main sections.

In Section 4.1, I outline the analytical approach to the analysis of the empirical data, with a focus on the qualitative methods used, namely a triangulation of *Iterative Thematic Inquiry* (ITI) and *Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis* (SVTA). I explain why I chose to use them, their theoretical and epistemological background, and how I applied them in the study by discussing and presenting the development of the results.

The second, third, and fourth sections are dedicated to the in-depth analysis of the three UAP case studies, introduced in Chapter 3, Subsection 3.1.3. Section 4.2 focuses on UAP 01BO – *Antonello Ghezzi* and two of its art-works, AW01BO – '*Io e Te'*, and AW02BO – '*La Palazzina dei Sogni'*, while Section 4.3 presents the analysis of UAP 04BO – *This Is So Temporary* and three of its art-works, AW11BO – 'Farò', AW12BO – *'Anti-monument-A Living Unit'*, and AW13BO – *'Anti-monument-Temporary but Resistant'*. Finally, Section 4.4 is dedicated to the UAP 06BO – *Serendippo* and two of its art-works, AW17BO – *'Disegnare Dialoghi'*, and AW18BO – *'PubbliCITTÀ'*. I start by providing a reflexive account of analysis of each ethnographic context, detailing the artistic practices, their members, the art-works and the urban sites where these were situated and took place, and where I conducted fieldwork. I then follow by introducing three different definitions, or ways of framing, UAP's processes, each related to a specific case study: *interactive objects*; *devices*; and *programs*. The remainder of each of the three sections is dedicated to a *thick visuo-textual presentation of the findings* from the comprehensive analysis process, focusing on the CPs of the seven art-works of the three UAPs.

4.1 An iterative visuo-textual approach: analytical methods, procedures, and findings

To analyze the collected data, which included interviews, SRI transcriptions, visual materials, field notes, and written documents, I used a triangulation of two qualitative analysis methods, specifically *Iterative Thematic Inquiry* (ITI; Morgan

and Nica, 2020) and *Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis* (SVTA; Brown and Collins, 2021).

In a previous discussion, I explained my interpretation of methodological triangulation and its usefulness in an interdisciplinary qualitative study, specifically during the data collection phase of fieldwork. I would therefore like to refer the reader to that discussion in Section 3.2 of Chapter 3. Now, my choice of this particular strategy of inquiry within the context of empirical data analysis was, on the one hand, meant to reaffirm the intention of lending "rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth" to the examination of the collected material (Denzin, 2012, p. 82). On the other hand, I opted for ITI and SVTA because I anticipated that they would guarantee continuity, aligning with both the overarching methodological approach to data collection and the specific methods employed – namely, semi-structured interviews and visual ethnography. This decision was mainly based on the methodological emphasis on iterative theme development and communication, in the case of ITI, and the focus on the interplay between textual and visual materials, in the case of SVTA. Additionally, both methods adopted an overarching interpretative, abductive, and reflexive attitude.

Other fundamental considerations that led me to choose the triangulation of the ITI method with the SVTA method were: first and foremost, the research question I wanted to explore; second, the characteristics of the data I had collected; and third, the practical aspects related to managing and analyzing the volume of data gathered. With regard to the first concern, the decision to rely on this approach was informed by the peculiar focus of my research, which explored experiential, contextual, and organizational aspects of artistic practice and its production at a 'micro' level. Specifically, the study sought to understand artists' experiences and interactions with urban transformations as manifested in the creation of their art-works, and thus, in the art-works themselves. These concerns suggested the choice of methods that would explicitly explore lived experiences and narratives of 'doings' and 'things.' To this end, other methods, such as Narrative Analysis (Rosenthal & Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004; Crossley, 2000), and (to a lesser extent) Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA, Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009) would have easily fit my perspective of considering artists as telling a story – both *verbally* and *visually* – about their creative activities in relation to their experience of how Bologna has changed over time, rather than simply responding to my questions. Moreover, they would have been particularly appropriate in the case of a comparative study that only considered data collected from the semi-structured interviews. However, I eventually dropped these other methods because their focus on individual biographies seemed mismatched given the case study design of my research and its focus on in-depth inquiry of not only textual but also visual data. Indeed, the type and amount of data I had significantly influenced my decision about how to conduct analysis throughout the study. Anticipating a large and somewhat complex dataset consisting of both textual and visual data, I hypothesized that an approach that balanced depth and breadth would be beneficial. In this regard, a notable feature of both ITI and SVTA is their somewhat 'pragmatic'

approach (and overtly pragmatist, in the case of ITI) in adapting to a diverse range of epistemological perspectives and research aims. These methods also allowed for a process of reflexivity – another key component of both – in which my subjective experience was considered valuable in the interpretation of the data. Notably, this stance also shares many similarities with other qualitative analysis methods such as Thematic Analysis and Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), as well as Framework Analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Parkinson et al., 2016), which I also had initially considered.

Once I selected the methods, I conducted the data analysis in two phases. These two phases ran in parallel throughout the research, often overlapping and constantly feeding off each other. The first phase (1) involved analyzing the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the larger sample of participants using ITI. This was done as the interviews were conducted and transcribed. This initial phase yielded preliminary results in the form of "thematic summaries," which I continuously revised, challenged, and reiterated, from "preconceived themes" to "temporarily final" themes (Morgan and Nica, 2020). In reality, the development of themes began even prior to data collection, as I will explain in Subsection 4.1.1. Over time, these themes merged with the second phase of analysis, which also coincided with the beginning of the visual ethnography conducted with the three UAP cases alone, i.e., the collection of visual material and the transcripts produced as a result of the SRI sessions. Accordingly, the second phase (2) consisted of the combined and interconnected analysis of both visual and textual datasets using SVTA, including the themes from the first phase.

During the initial familiarization with the dataset, I used an Excel spreadsheet to organize excerpts from the data and identify the preliminary thematic summaries. Then, in progressing with the analysis, I implemented Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software, to further analyze the entire textual and visual data set (Figure 34).

I would like to mention here that while the account I presented so far may appear to be a straightforward evaluation and balancing of options, tools, and techniques leading to a procedural and logical conclusion that meets the study's questions and aims, the reality of selecting an analysis approach and then conducting the analysis itself was definitely much messier. The process involved numerous back and forth between various positions, ideas, and choices, as well as a serious conscious consideration of their implications. Recognizing this, I eventually settled on an interaction between two methods that relied on an iterative and interpretive component, albeit systematic and rigorous, underpinned by abductive logic, and characterized by a particular emphasis on materialities, narratives, and process flows.

The overall analysis produced the findings presented in this chapter, which is centered on the three UAP case studies. In this context, to recur to the main objective of this study, my analytical focus has been fundamentally directed towards multi-layered *visuo-textual thick descriptions of the art-works* and their

CPs, probing into the interaction with the artist's experience of change within Bologna and its urban sites.

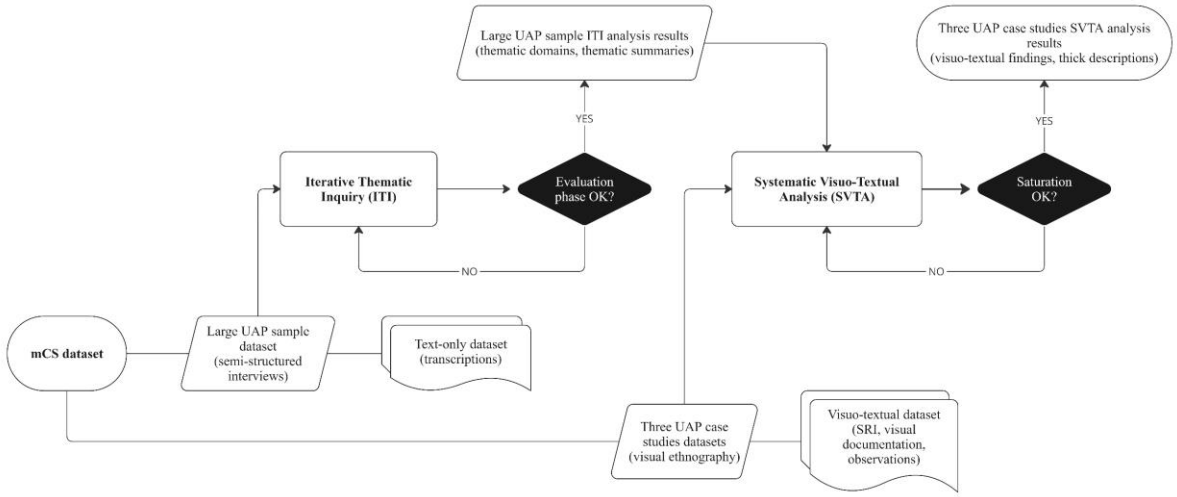


Figure 34: Diagram showing the design of the overall iterative visuo-textual analysis process. Illustration: own work.

In Subsections 4.1.1 and 4.1.3, I will provide a concise overview of the two chosen analysis methods, ITI and SVTA, along with their respective procedures. I will illustrate these procedures by discussing their results to demonstrate their application, particularly in Subsection 4.1.2, before presenting the comprehensive visuo-textual analysis findings in Sections 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

4.1.1 Iterative Thematic Inquiry (ITI)

The *Iterative Thematic Inquiry* (ITI) qualitative analysis method was introduced in 2020 by sociologists David L. Morgan and Andreea Nica. The aim of ITI is to develop themes from qualitative data from the very beginning of the research project and throughout by assessing and confronting the researcher's initial preconceptions and relying on writing and memoing instead of coding. To this purpose, a continual, iterative, and cyclical revision of tentative results is used as the primary procedure for generating a set of 'temporarily final' themes (Morgan and Nica, 2020). ITI understands analysis as a formalized version of the inquiry process, philosophically drawing on John Dewey's pragmatist concept of *inquiry* (Morgan, 2014; Dewey, 1910). As I have discussed in Chapter 1, this understanding aligned with the epistemological perspective of this study.

According to the scholars, Dewey's approach to inquiry involves "using existing beliefs and prior knowledge" to interpret and define experiences "that create problems, questions, or uncertainty" (Morgan and Nica, 2020, p.2). The inquirer then reflects on the problem's nature and potential solutions, evaluating their implications and consequences. They then take action to resolve the

problematic situation. In a formalized research context, the 'problematic situation' is turned into a research question, while 'taking action' involves collecting and analyzing data. "From a research perspective, beliefs in the form of personal experience, knowledge of previous work on a subject, and encounters with existing theory provide a starting point that is in a constant state of flux, once the research process begins. This ongoing process brings beliefs and actions into a reciprocal relationship that is the essence of pragmatism" (Morgan and Nica, 2020, p.2). Nevertheless, Dewey's approach also requires a constant "interpretation of the outcomes" of the action taken by the inquirer, i.e., by the researcher (Morgan and Nica, 2020, p.2). This "iterative-cyclical problem-solving" process produces new knowledge that can either reinforce or alter the beliefs that initiated the inquiry, until temporarily reaching "settled beliefs that are no longer felt to require testing through further action" (Morgan and Nica, 2020, p.2). The main idea of ITI then is that researcher's preconceptions exist and should be explicitly acknowledged, confronted, and understood by the inquirer by consciously bringing them to the forefront and exposing them to the empirical data.

The ITI consists of four phases which are aligned with the inquiry process described above (Figure 35). These phases begin with (1) the *assessment of initial beliefs as themes*, a set of preconceptions brought to the research by the inquirer, followed by (2) the *development of new beliefs during data collection*, which involves going back and forth between several times between reflexive memoing about the current choices of tentative themes and a testing of said choices through data collection. Next, we move to (3) a *listing of tentative themes*, revising, reformulating, and organizing them, to finally (4) *evaluating themes*.

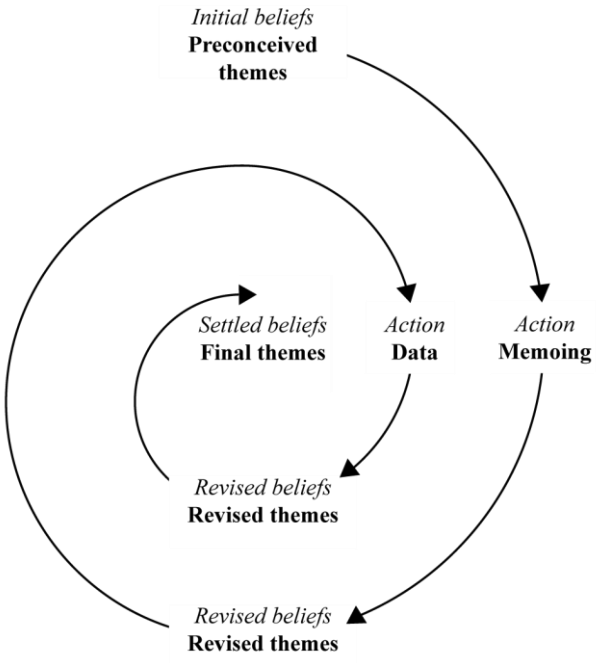


Figure 35: The ITI process as a process of inquiry: revising initial beliefs and preconceived themes. Illustration: own work, adapted from Morgan and Nica, 2020.

In the context of this study, I used ITI more as an 'umbrella framework' and analytical mentality to move from the general textual dataset obtained from semi-structured interviews with the larger cohort of artistic practices (interview transcriptions) to the particular visuo-textual dataset from visual ethnography with the three UAP case studies (visual documents and SRI transcriptions), and back. This was done while continuously linking, confronting, and communicating these two dimensions with one another and explicitly engaging with (and challenging) my *a priori* knowledge and its shifts over the course of the entire inquiry.

In this sense, I recognized that my preconceived beliefs came from a variety of sources, but over time gravitated primarily toward an exchange between prior personal experiences – such as being trained in architectural design and visual arts, as well as having practiced in the field through several public art projects – and existing research literature and theories in the various disciplines touched by the study – primarily aesthetics, art and architectural history, sociology, and urban studies. I have already discussed these aspects in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, so I refer the reader to those chapters.

Now, it is worth mentioning here that the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data and the drafting of the theoretical chapters proceeded in parallel during the research. This was done intentionally. Although I have somewhat favored fieldwork over deskwork, my encounters with theories and prior literature have been in constant dialogue with the gathering and exploration of the accounts of the artists I have been studying *with* from the very beginning of this research. Moving from my research questions, over time this attitude led me to develop a set of (extremely!) tentative expectations – or 'hypotheses' – about the likely answers to those questions. These expectations often took the form of memos, labels, but most of all schemes, maps, and diagrams. They encapsulated the "initial beliefs" or tentative themes referred to by Morgan and Nica in the first working phase of ITI. I continuously recognized, tested, interpreted, and evaluated their meanings and implications. This process intensified when I came into contact with the empirical data during fieldwork. In doing so, I subscribed to the aims of ITI in that it assisted me to explicitly address "one of the key issues in any form of qualitative analysis: the extent to which the ultimate conclusions arise from the data or from the researcher's own preconceptions" (Morgan and Nica, 2020, p.4). Accordingly, in keeping with a pragmatist perspective, I understood the notion of 'themes' and their development as *serving the purpose* of both guiding and communicating the entire analysis activity, especially with regard to the subsequent case study exploration through SVTA, where they eventually converged. This attitude provided the groundwork for exercises in reflexivity and a way of explicitly encountering and addressing my preconceptions about the research topics (Morgan and Nica, 2020, p.4) from the beginning to the end of the study, whose shifts and changes emerged through action, which meant exposing these 'fallibilist' beliefs-themes to the data while collecting it.

Morgan and Nica define the constant encounter with the 'data' – which, to my understanding, means with the artists, their accounts and creative practicing – as a "learning process where *analysis happens every time researchers hear or observe something that has an impact on their prior beliefs*" (Morgan and Nica, 2020, p.5, emphasis in original). This moment usually coincides with the second phase of ITI. Here, beliefs can be changed by either being reinforced, challenged, or expanded. In the field, all of the three instances happened first while conducting, transcribing, and familiarizing with the various artist's semi-structured interviews, and later throughout the in-depth exploration of the three case studies through visual ethnography. At this point, I started to develop memos and schemes into a set of *thematic summaries*, focusing on the relationship and emerging linkages between them. Throughout the entire analysis process, I consistently maintained this conscious approach, which became a defining feature of my use of the SVTA method, as I will explain in Subsection 4.1.3.

Moving to phase three coincided with reaching theoretical saturation. As explained by Morgan and Nica (2020, p.6), "in ITI, the realization that theoretical saturation has occurred takes the form of finding no new materials for memo writing, and thus no further need to modify the current list of themes." In this context, theoretical saturation meant that I felt satisfied with the data I had encountered, explored, and thematically summarized, as well as considering how its understanding had evolved during the course of the research.

Eventually, this process yielded a somewhat stable – yet still quite provisional – set of thematic summaries, listed in four *thematic domains*. I divided these domains as follows: (1) *Perspectives on the urban artistic practice*; (2) *Perspectives on Bologna and its transformation*; (3) *Reference to the urban site and its changes, via the art-work*; and (4) *Response to the urban site and its changes, via the art-work.* While the first two thematic domains regarded the macro-levels of artistic practice and the city, the latter two focused on the micro-level of art creation, specifically in relation to the temporality of the urban site connected to the various art interventions of the participants. These four domains encompassed a total of twelve thematic summaries. At this stage, I chose to retain the high volume of themes rather than prematurely deleting any of them. Their effectiveness was later assessed and evaluated in the fourth analysis phase. Speaking of my interaction with the theoretical framework during data analysis, here I examined artists' accounts of their practice using three interrelated concepts from existing theory, as outlined in Chapter 2: *intentionality*, which refers to how artists intend the features of their art-work; *sanctioning*, which refers to how artists present and endorse these features; and *enactment*, which refers to how artists perform or realize them in and through the art-work (Irvin, 2020, 2013, and 2005; Caldarola, 2020). Briefly, the first thematic domain, *Perspectives on the urban artistic practice*, referred to the different ways in which the artists made sense of their artistic practicing in Bologna, how they identified and defined it, as well as their positionality. The second thematic domain, *Perspectives on Bologna and its transformation*, referred to the artists' narratives about how particular characteristics of Bologna, or its

distinctiveness, have transformed over time. These narratives were presented in relation to their artistic practicing and its connection to and presence in the city. The third thematic domain, *Reference to the urban site and its changes, via the art-work*, concerned the ways artists referenced the urban site and its variations over time during the creation of their art-work. Finally, the fourth thematic domain was the *Response to the urban site and its changes, via the art-work.* This domain was closely linked to the referencing of the urban site and involved a range of responses to it. It also concerned artists' intentions, sanctions, and the enactment of the art-work at the site itself, collating three interrelated thematic summaries connected to the artists' perspectives on their urban artistic practice.

The fourth and final phase of the ITI analysis consisted of evaluating the four thematic domains, and thus the large number of thematic summaries I had produced thus far. According to the procedure described by Morgan and Nica, this phase of analysis draws on the idea of coding found in traditional analytical approaches. However, here "the coding process does not generate the themes. Instead, the themes are developed throughout the data collection process, and then systematically assessed against the existing data" (Morgan and Nica, 2020, p.6). This analytical activity initially involved interacting with the twelve thematic summaries – here considered as codes – and the four thematic domains through comparison, and in light of my research question. Secondly, it involved re-engaging the overall thematic framework with the entirety of the textual dataset, highlighting connections and disconnections, matches and mismatches, confirmations and disconfirmations. To do this, I used the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti and I constantly produced memos, predominantly in the form of mind maps (Figure 36). Keeping with the iterative nature of the analytical method resulted in conducting the evaluation of the thematic summaries through over six 'rounds' of comparison between the thematic framework and the collected data. During these rounds, I gradually revised, split, and/or merged the previously produced themes.

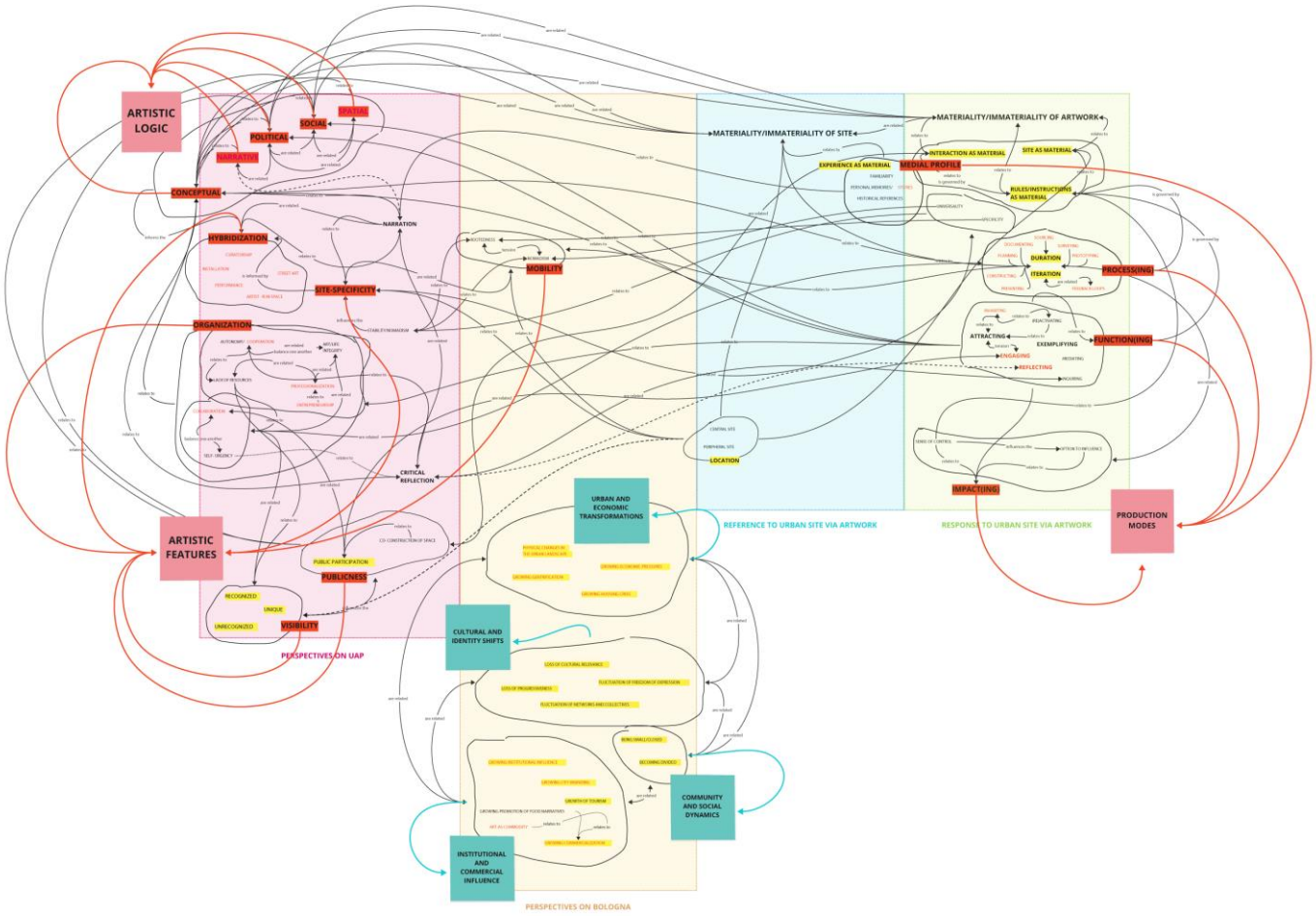


Figure 36: Mind mapping as a 'messy' memoing process during the fourth phase of ITI, involving the thematic domains and summaries generated from previous analysis phases, interacting and being compared with one another. Over time, this interaction produced new relationships in relation to the empirical dataset.

4.1.2 Results from the ITI

In line with what argued by Morgan and Nica, the result of this process was a reworking – and consequently, a restructuring – of the entire thematic framework, generating a final version that comprised two thematic domains: (1) *Perspectives on artistic practice and the urban art-work*; (2) *Perspectives on Bologna and its transformation*. I then identified, for the first domain, three thematic summaries, namely: (a) *Artistic logic*; (b) *Artistic features*; (c) *Production modes*; and for the second domain, four thematic summaries, namely: (I) *Urban and economic transformations*; (II) *Cultural and identity shifts*; (III) *Community and social dynamics*; (IV) *Institutional and commercial influence.* I articulated each thematic summary through various sub-themes, as shown in Figure 37 and Figure 38, which represented a sort of 'indexing' of the memos developed during the evaluation process. The richness of content generated by the ITI analysis is a peculiar characteristic of the method itself, which aims not only to capture but also to retain the complexity of aspects characterizing each specific theme and, consequently, the

studied phenomenon. This complexity was then useful during the SVTA analysis process. Operationally speaking, at this point I transferred the two thematic domains, the seven thematic summaries, and their sub-themes into an Excel spreadsheet, assigning direct quotations and other supporting material to illustrate how each theme related to the dataset.

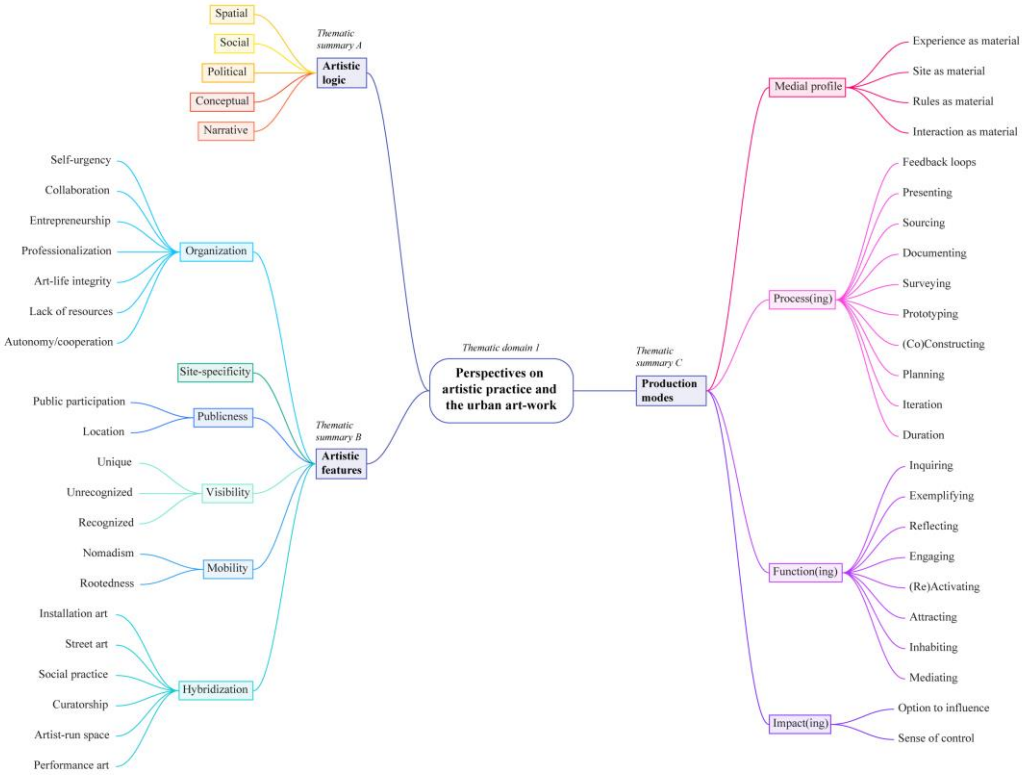


Figure 37: Mind map of thematic domain *Perspectives on artistic practice and the urban art-work*, with its three thematic summaries and their sub-themes branching into codes.

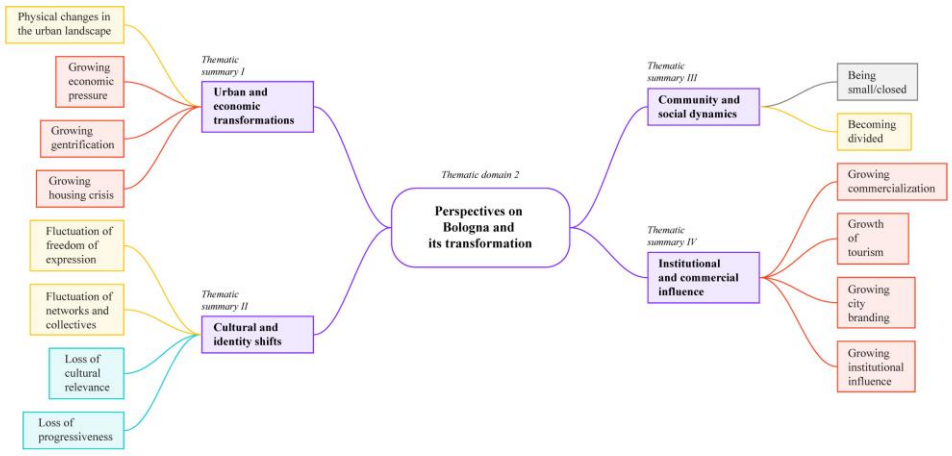


Figure 38: Mind map of thematic domain *Perspectives on Bologna and its transformation*, with its four thematic summaries and their sub-themes.

By the time I reached this point, I decided that the two thematic domains and their thematic summaries, along with interview excerpts, were sufficient to

converge into and interact with the SVTA analysis process, generating the final results of the overall analysis, as will be evident in the following sections. Therefore, SVTA represented the 'closure' of ITI. In this context, I used the thematic summaries to 'pull apart' and interpret, among other purposes, how well they accounted for key elements in the visuo-textual dataset concerning the three case studies, as I will explain in the following subsection.

I regarded the final thematic framework generated from ITI merely as '*working findings'* to be used in the subsequent analysis cycle (SVTA) rather than as definitive results of the study. Thus, here I will provide only a brief report.

Thematic domain 1: Perspectives on artistic practice and the urban art-work

The first thematic domain, *Perspectives on artistic practice and the urban art-work*, combines the preliminary domains *Perspectives on the urban artistic practice*, *Reference to the urban site and its changes via the art-work*, and *Response to the urban site and its changes via the art-work*, by focusing on the attitudes, characteristics, and operational modes predominantly emerging regarding urban artistic practicing in Bologna, giving up on the previously marked separation between the macro- and the micro- level of art creation, i.e., between the artistic practice and the urban art-work.

This thematic domain is strongly connected to a fundamental component of my research question, namely the underlying logic and modes of urban artistic practice and, consequently, the mechanisms through which urban art-works are created by the artist.

Thematic summary A: Artistic logic

The first thematic summary, *Artistic logic*, relates to how the artists make sense of and define the attitude of their artistic activity, or "the intelligence of practical [creative] action" (Zembylas, 2014, p.12) in Bologna. The primary emerging attitudes of urban artistic practice in Bologna aligned with the existing literature, revealing a character that is simultaneously *conceptual*, *spatial*, *narrative*, *social*, and *political*. All these attitudes participate, at different degrees and in various ways, in the artistic practicing of all of the artists interviewed.

The conceptual aspect of artistic logic emphasizes the importance of the underlying ideas behind an urban art-work. For the majority of these artists, it is more significant that the concept exists and is well-defined. One participant reflects on this by stating, "When we have defined the concept, what we mean, we are good to go. [...] It is more important that the concept exists, that that form exists there" (02BO A). Moreover, urban artistic practicing starts as a practical idea, and therefore its implementation is deemed crucial by many: "[The artwork] was first of all an idea... the implementation of an idea" (14BO AC).

For most participants, this dynamic of ideation and implementation is necessarily spatial and involves a continuous exchange with the tangible and intangible public environment of the city. One artist explains how the city itself responds to their artistic interventions, creating a dialogue between the artist and

the urban environment: “[The city] gives you a response that is complicit with your process. It says: ‘I understand what you are doing… it’s okay for there to be writings next to my wall because I won’t erase it, but I will give you the opportunity to be who you are here, because I have this to offer in return.’ […] ‘You give me a vision of a space. I have the space. I give it to you.’ This it’s truly a response from the city” (09BO ACR). For many, this kind of engagement also represents a way to break away from traditional venues where art is usually expected. This also has an inherent spatial character: “There is a theme related to spaces, so leaving theaters, leaving the usual places of culture, and venturing out, putting yourself in a liminal space or on a frontier, even in places where no one expects us... and so a small square, a public park, a street” (08BO A).

A strong narrative attitude permeates the artistic practice aimed at urban spaces. In this sense, the predominantly emerging logic is storytelling, which serves as a reflexive and spatial process in the creation of the art-work. “In our practice... the narration also becomes a machine, it also becomes space... and therefore we build things that on the one hand receive the imaginative process, a process of reflection on meaning… on the other hand, they are devices to then occupy public space and become recognizable, attractive” (08BO A). The raw material of storytelling is often sourced from the street level: “Artists manage to bring together different needs, to bring them out... to tell their stories. We bring out interesting archives. We tell the story of the city starting from the street” (09BO ACR). The practice of storytelling through the urban art-work is not just for personal expression but also for conveying messages to a broader audience. “[...] Through this practice, I can leave a type of message. So... to tell a story. Not just to tell it to myself and the people within the graffiti world. [...] Through the communicative power of an image, to convey a message or tell a story. To tell something” (13BO A). If on the one hand, there is no urban art-work without a story, on the other hand, a fundamental condition emerges from most accounts: it is primarily the artist who must narrate it. As another quote states, “But I don't think there is any artwork that can be perceived better... that is, perceived well without our narrative” (01BO A).

For most of the artists interviewed, artistic practice in urban space is intrinsically political. Not only the narratives but also the ideas, gestures, and methods of creating the art-work express themselves politically: “For me, art is the only political form that makes sense to exist” (09BO ACR). This proximity of art to politics allows it to break out of exclusive circles: “[...] we are interested in bringing the language of aesthetics closer to that of politics. [...] of course, every gesture, every practice, every method is always the expression of a certain type of politics. [...] we believe that art, indeed, must subscribe to politics. Only in this way will art manage to break out of the small circle of insiders” (07BO AC). What emerges is also a strong social component of art-making, which views artistic activity as a form of sociation. For many artists, the value of their art-works lies in their ability to build and reinforce social connections: “[...] a possibility to reconnect to a cultural dimension with this strong connotation towards the social” (03BO ACR).

Thematic summary B: Artistic features

The second thematic summary, *Artistic features*, addresses the specific characteristics of urban artistic practice that emerged predominantly from the artists' accounts regarding their work in Bologna. These features pertain both to the practice itself and to the act of practicing, together encompassing the core structures underlying the 'art-making' of the interviewed artists and the key traits of their urban art-works. I identified six main features: *site-specificity*, *hybridization*, *mobility*, *organization*, *publicness*, and *visibility*.

Site-specificity emphasizes creating artworks tailored for particular locations. All artists' accounts highlighted site-specificity as a fundamental aspect of both their practice and art-works in Bologna, albeit to varying degrees. This finding strongly aligns with existing literature. One quote captures this feature well: "[...] we have the idea of site-specific, that is to do something for a specific space, which makes sense in that place, in that form" (04BO AC). This focus on the relationship between the art-work and the specific site is further exemplified by the strategic choice of locations, as illustrated by: "We chose to work in that site precisely because there was the possibility that we had imagined of then projecting the work onto the facade of one of these buildings that overlooked this little park" (05BO A). Once again, the tension between concept and implementation is evident. Indeed, the conceptualization of the artwork was strongly influenced by its intended environments, understood as both material and immaterial. In describing the process of painting one of their murals at the site of the Piazza Aldrovandi local market, another artist reinforced this understanding by stating: "The content [of the artwork], however, for us in many cases is not only related to the gesture but to... to our artistic practicing, placed in a context. Placed in a situation. So, there is a context that is not generalized, but a context... like that of the local market, in a historical moment in which the local market is dying" (10BO AC).

Different degrees of site-specificity are also related to the feature of mobility. Artistic mobility encompasses both rootedness and nomadism, reflecting how artists balance their sense of belonging and connections to Bologna with their need to move and engage with different communities through their practice. The rootedness aspect is captured in the words of one of the artists, who described how their practice was born: "[...] our founding experiences were in Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Syracuse, Calais, in European theatres. But then our roots, our birth as a company, our legal headquarters are in Bologna" (08BO A). Nomadism, on the other hand, was described as an ongoing process of movement and engagement either with contexts other than Bologna or with different sites within the city. The process of movement and engagement concerns both the artist as an individual and the product of their practice, the artwork: "Ideally [...] this type of creature [the art-work] should [initiate] a process where it goes around and around and around and at a certain point it ends up in a place and establishes the, I don't know… the Participatory Arts Park!" (08BO A).

The dual nature of mobility, as well as the dynamic interaction between nomadism and rootedness, is further illustrated by an understanding of urban artistic practice as: "[…] the possibility of being a network, in motion. To be a network without a specific place, yet well-rooted in the individual situations that occur. Without a specific place, whether it's Bologna… but in the situation" (09BO ACR).

Mobility also manifests at the level of the disciplinary positioning of the artistic practice itself. Hybridization, another major feature emerging across all accounts, involves crossing the boundaries between different art genres and forms. This approach is well described in the quote: "[...] we have often crossed the border between different genres [...] We have often bordered between theatre, visual arts, music, radio, documentary, cinema" (05BO A). Another quote emphasizes the integrative nature of hybrid practices, already well documented by numerous critical-historical literature on contemporary art, drawing from competencies outside the artistic-creative domain, such as the social sciences: "[...] we wanted it to also be a journey... A walk, for example, with the residents. Even with those who don't live in those places. A walk with sociologists… a performative artistic intervention" (09BO ACR). The foundational value of breaking traditional barriers and exploring cross-disciplinarity is also echoed in the words of this artist: "The foundational value and attempt is about leaving the sectors… not only stepping out of one's comfort zone but also leaving the usual genres. Entering zones of either ambiguity, transgression, or indeed, someone else's territory" (08BO A).

Yet for many, hybridizing art practices also comes with practical reflections on how to organize and structure their creative work. Here, organization came to the fore as a feature present in the majority of accounts. Organizational aspects include autonomy, cooperation, resource management, and professionalization. Autonomy and cooperation were emphasized by many artists as crucial for maintaining their artistic integrity. An integrity that concerns the points of contact or divergence between the artist's life and their work and affects the reputation and credibility of their practice: “Yes, a coherence between life and art. They are not two autonomous spaces. There is no autonomy. […] So [with our practice] we also try to be ethically consistent, between our life and what we do in art” (07BO AC). Or again: "[...] we also see in Bologna, which is full of bottom-up associations... but it seems that their practice is done only to eventually enter the institutional world. This is also what we try to reflect on. How to avoid entering that world. To create different practices" (07BO AC). The challenge of financial independence, emerging in all accounts, is addressed through resource management: "Because we have no money. We have no funding. [...] We put our money into it precisely to avoid getting into the logic of getting financed" (10BO AC). Professionalization and entrepreneurship are also key elements of urban artistic practice. In many accounts, these aspects are described by the artists as corresponding to the challenges connected to the transition to a more structured approach to their practicing: "[...] it's a question of giving oneself a structure, a stability. [...] the attempt to make the professional soul coexist with that of political militancy, of nomadism, is another very difficult challenge. Usually, they are two things that go

separately" (08BO A). Some artists have often leveraged understanding their artistic work as a “creative enterprise. In fact, that is what we do.” (02BO A) “The question is whether an artist can define themselves as a creative enterprise? Perhaps yes.” (01BO A) “[...] we said: ‘we work with companies… we will develop contemporary art and creativity projects with companies.’ They are the ones who give you credibility...” (02BO A).

Public participation and engagement are central to the practice of all the artists interviewed, linking more evidently the feature of publicness to both the political and social artistic logic. The desire to create participatory art is understood by many as another way of venturing out of traditional artistic paths: “[…] to create a participatory practice that also involves people outside the sector. The reason why… one of the reasons why the collective was born" (06BO A). This openness to the public is further exemplified by a commitment to accessibility, which is also both spatial and narrative: "[...] saying: 'okay, I want to tell some things, but I want to do it in this way, in the urban space, in the public space.' So, to do it not inside a museum, not inside a gallery, not within closed circuits, but rather to leave it as open as possible for everyone... accessible to everyone and all people from all social classes" (13BO A).

Related to both the publicness of the artists’ practice, as well as its organizational aspects, is also the feature of visibility. Visibility concerns the recognition and impact not only of public urban artworks but also of the artists themselves. For many artists, achieving visibility involved either a strategic placement of their work or a reflection on their positionality within the local setting, both spatially and community-wise, as reflected in this quote where one artist describes their relationship with the Municipality of Bologna: "We were just disconnected from the world. And now they [the Municipality] know us. [...] They ask us because they know what our themes are, our way of working" (02BO A). Another quote highlights the importance of selecting high-traffic locations to maximize exposure and, in many cases, public participation and engagement: "[With the artwork] we tried to take the most frequented place, precisely to intercept as many people as possible" (06BO A). In addition to physical presence, digital platforms play a crucial role in enhancing visibility and reaching a wider audience: "Maybe I could go paint every day in an abandoned factory... post the drawings online... and they would still have visibility. Because the audience of people who follow me online would see it in some way" (13BO A).

Thematic summary C: Production modes

Finally, the third thematic summary, *Production modes*, deals with the methods employed by artists in creating their urban art-works, highlighting the characteristics of their creative processes. In other words, it explores the mechanisms through which, according to the artists interviewed, urban art-works are conceived, developed, and experienced – i.e., constituted – within the urban environment of Bologna. The production modes that emerged are mainly centered

on identifying the art-work's *medial profile* and three interconnected creative dynamics: *process(ing)*, *function(ing)*, and *impact(ing)*.

The medial profile of urban art-works isolates and identifies the diverse materials and mediums used by the artists in their creations. Across all accounts, it emerged that the art-works' medial profile extends beyond traditional artistic materials (which, however, are still present) to include both tangible and intangible elements, understood as 'raw materials' to be processed in the art-making; these are interactions, sites, experiences, and rules. The notion of using interactions as a material emphasizes the relational aspect of the art-work, where the participation of the public is central to its existence and meaning. This conception is well encapsulated in this quote: "The artwork wouldn't exist without participation. For it to be activated, others are needed" (06BO A). Interactions are directly related to experiences. Indeed, experiences also plays a major role in the making of the art-work, as artists draw from both personal and communal histories, theirs and of others, to shape their creations in urban environments: "[...] our way [of making the artwork] was to entrust ourselves to these elderly people who told us the story of this neighborhood" (08BO A). For many, this is only possible by "[spending] time in the place where you are going to intervene when planning public art projects! The issue is not representing a theme. The issue is acting in the place. Accessing and acting in the place" (14BO AC). The conceptual, narrative, and spatial artistic logic are well linked to this understanding. The site itself becomes a raw material too, with artists incorporating specific physical and non-physical elements of a location, thus articulating the site-specific feature of both the art-work and of their practice. Two different artists, recounting the making of two of their art-works in Bologna, effectively describe the different uses of the site, broadly understood, as a constitutive material of their creation: "Since this was the place where they repaired armored vehicles, we made these two insects... but they resemble a grenade and a bullet. So, there is still a reference to the place where we painted. To the function it once had" (13BO A); and: "[…] That manifesto was born. The red manifesto that I showed you... in which there was this building… Having documented the first demolition... It was one of the first buildings to be demolished..." (14BO AC). In the majority of the artists' accounts, the processing of mediums and materials in the art-work production is governed by the making (sanctioning) of instructions, guidelines, or rules, which in and of themselves are understood as a constitutive, feature-like, immaterial part of the art-work and its meaning. These conceptual rules are often created by the artists and are provided to participants to shape the final outcome, as explained in this quote: "These were the instructions [of the artwork]. [...] They are instructions. But they are also somewhat joking instructions" (06BO A), characterizing the art-work as a collaborative and iterative process, developing over time.

Indeed, the creative dynamic defined here as process(ing) accounts for the temporal and iterative aspects of producing urban art-works. Time, in the form of duration, was a key consideration in all accounts, with art-works ranging from temporary installations to permanent fixtures, each requiring different levels of both

maintenance and engagement. For instance: "[the artwork lasted] a weekend. But also, because technologically it couldn't stay. It was designed specifically for those days" (01BO A). The iterative and process-based nature of the urban art-work allows for its continuous development and adaptation, generating a multitude of instantiations – considered by some artists as prototypes – of the same art-work either at different sites or at the same location. This was another major aspect that emerged across all accounts. As one artist stated: "[The artwork] constantly takes new directions. It is never finished" (01BO A). Continuous feedback loops with people who participate in and interact with the works ensure that the art-work remains relevant and engaging at its site. For many artists, this also seems to represent the underlying mechanism holding together the materials (i.e., the medial profile) selected and manipulated by the artists in its making. This aspect activates an attitude that converges in the social artistic logic, where the art-work is understood as co-constructed with others: "It's theirs, their [reflection of the people on the artwork]. And that reflection of theirs is mutual. It contributes to our creative process" (09BO ACR). Two additional major aspects of art-work process(ing) are thorough planning and site surveys. These were deemed essential by the majority of the artists both for understanding what they are doing and to integrate their work into the local context, and back. Asked about their creative process, one artist told me that: "It takes time. Because you have to dedicate time, you have to listen, you have to look, you have to walk, you have to spend time, energy, and effort to... plan" (14BO AC). For many, these processes entail activities such as documenting, sourcing materials, as well as reflecting on strategies to communicate their work. This relates, in turn, to sanctioning rules governing the interaction and presentation of their art-works and, consequently, specific features of their practice, such as visibility: “From the beginning, when we had our first exhibition, we dedicated space, even before opening the exhibition, to explain who we were and what we wanted to do” (12BO CR).

What they aim at and how they operate toward that aim is another underlying dynamic of the creative production of the majority of artists interviewed. I understood this aspect as function(ing), an understanding rooted on a notion that emerged across all accounts: the ‘function’ of the urban art-work. Function(ing) addresses how urban art-works operate within urban public spaces of Bologna, focusing on their capacity to inhabit, attract, activate, engage, reflect, exemplify, inquire, and mediate. For many artists, inhabiting spaces of the city with their art-works meant to temporarily transforming those spaces either into livable, inviting areas where people may want to gather and interact, or creating home-like places: "[...] if a public space works you want to live it, to stay there, or to meet up with others" (03BO ACR); “What I then did [with the artwork] is actually a housing unit, where there is also the bed. Having a bed in a square is symbolically strong. That is, in a society where a home is not yet a right, it would perhaps be occupied by a homeless person” (06BO A). Attracting the attention of the public, drawing people in, and being recognizable through visual appeal and aesthetic features was seen as another primary function of the art-work by the majority of artists interviewed:

"[The artwork] had to create just this feeling of visual attraction" (03BO ACR), while for others (re)activating spaces through art functioned as a way of mobilizing cultural and social engagement at different sites, at both the communal and the individual level. "We believe that art is a cultural activator, let's say, of activism. This is the concept," one artist told me; "So, we work around this idea of cultural activism" (12BO CR). The activation also involves bringing to the fore the memories of people living in the sites where the artists intervened: "When the residents came to see [the artwork]... people came to see it... it was all... an activation of other memories" (14BO AC), as well as to engage a larger public in interactions: "[The artwork's] function is to stimulate relationships between people there, who otherwise would not have spoken to each other" (07BO AC) To this purpose, many artists saw a correspondence between themselves and their art-works in playing the role of mediators: "[…] in addition to [people] talking to each other, they also speak through our artistic object" (07BO AC). Reflecting and encouraging critical thought was another important function reported by many artists: "[...] it was an installation... composed of a tennis umpire's chair with two seats instead of one... where people [...] engaged in a reflection, let's say a philosophical one" (01BO A). In this sense, many saw their art-works as processes of inquiry and research, creating a linkage with the iterative nature of their artistic production: "The first thing is always to start from the premise that we are interested in doing research. This is our character. Our projects are always research projects, even if they go beyond the academic logic of research, right? Because they don't always have a well-defined goal" (12BO CR). Exemplification was another well-reported functioning mode of urban art-making. For many artists, their urban art-works served as models or examples of something, this 'something' being either new societal possibilities: "[...] somehow it has to be a small model of society, of the possibility of a society" (07BO AC), or playing a *make-believe* game (Caldarola, 2020, p.150) to imagine different ways of perceiving and acting upon a certain site, a certain city: "We, with this engaging and meaningful practice, want to... depending on the age of the participants... in some cases provide a foundational experience where they say, 'Oh, wow! It can also work like this!'" (08BO A).

Critical reflections on the efficacy of their practicing in Bologna emerged across all accounts of local artists, who described what may be thought of as an 'internal' feedback loop within the creative process of the urban art-work. In this regard, the creative dynamic that I have thematized as impact(ing) addresses the effects and influences of urban art-works, focusing on artists' sense of control, and their perceived option to influence the sites of intervention through their practice. To many artists interviewed, urban art-making offered a sense of agency that fluctuates between exercising and relinquishing control both on their art-work and over the site of intervention: "[...] if we want we can just close it [the access to the artwork] and nobody enters" (03BO ACR). In this regard, the adaptability of the art-work – through its process(ing) – was deemed crucial in the majority of the artists' accounts, requiring ongoing engagement and responsiveness. The potential to influence and change not only the sites of intervention but the entire city is a

significant aspect that emerged in many reflections of the artists interviewed, though the extent of this impact can vary significantly: "I might discover, in ten years, that everything I've done hasn't served any purpose. It hasn't had any... it hasn't modified the surrounding context in any way" (13BO A); or else: “[…] in such a small city... you will surely change the face of a city” (08BO A).

Thematic domain 2: Perspectives on Bologna and its transformation

The second thematic domain, *Perspectives on Bologna and its transformation*, maintains and refines the focus on the artists’ experience of the city's changes. In this case, I operated a thematic synthesis over the preliminary version of the thematic domain, which generated four thematic summaries.

Thematic summary I: Urban and economic transformations

The first thematic summary, *Urban and economic transformations*, deals with Bologna's struggle to balance modernization with cultural preservation, economic pressures, and social equity, as perceived by the artists.

All participants' accounts revealed a Bologna that had experienced significant physical transformations, especially in its architectural landscape. Post-war buildings were often viewed as unattractive, symbolizing a ‘removal of the metropolis’ that Bologna could have been, as reported by one artist: "There are just some ugly buildings built after the war, that's for sure… The entirety of via Ugo Bassi… via Marconi, etc. Got it? So, the metropolis was removed. Like a Freudian removal… So, on the one hand [Bologna is] incapable of being a metropolis. And on the other hand, removal because many actual things are removed. Entire elements of the city are erased… erased" (14BO AC). Recent demolition projects, such as the Mercato Sonato, highlighted the tension felt by many between preserving the city’s historical aesthetics and its material and immaterial heritage and creating new spaces through institutional planning: "I'm talking specifically about the Mercato Sonato, which is now being demolished to build a new cultural center... The orchestra will return, and everything will be restored... but the demolition of a building that has an aesthetic... a history in that place... well, is problematic for us." (12BO CR). To many, these efforts to regenerate urban areas reflected broader ambitions that often have not materialized: "[...] there was the bike station, which was also a great project... that failed and is no longer there. Looking back at that year, there was an ambition to regenerate spaces that was much broader than what exists now. And they were not just commercial spaces." (02BO A). Artists have also reported a notable absence of contemporary architecture that effectively dialogues with the historic elements of Bologna, leading to a perceived failure in modernizing the city's urban fabric: "This... acrimony towards contemporary architecture... towards a contemporary… that somehow dialogues with the past. This is also a bit of a failure... right? I mean, in all the cities of the world, there are contemporary elements that dialogue with historical centers... [...] Why do contemporary elements continue to be absent in Bologna's historic center? There is really nothing. Or am I wrong? Like, very little. No, there is nothing" (14BO AC).

All the artists I have interviewed reported how economic constraints were increasingly affecting Bologna's cultural and artistic sectors. They talked about how resources for cultural projects were often lacking, making it difficult for them to sustain their work, as explained by one artist: "Because in Bologna these days, money for culture... resources for culture, are becoming less and less. So, if you need to say, as it was done in the past, 'I need a year to develop a show'... You're screwed!" (08BO A). The rising cost of living also exacerbated this issue: "Clearly all this makes it more difficult to be an artist here. To be a time-waster. To be a 'flaneur,' a poet... or one who is not so successful, not so well-off. Why? Because the city does not allow it. Because it costs too much. Once you could perhaps afford to waste some time" (02BO A).

Gentrification was another well reported phenomenon across all accounts. According to the artists, gentrification concerned the entire city of Bologna, and particularly neighborhoods like Bolognina: "Surely there are examples of gentrification, right? A large part of the Bolognina neighborhood, right? The eviction of social experiences in Bolognina… these are evident things, right? In favor of the construction of new residential complexes, more or less social…" (13BO A). Large construction projects were felt by the majority as not aligned with the residents' needs, causing stress and displacement not only of individuals but also of many grassroots cultural and social experiences: "The thing about social centers and occupied centers, in general, was precisely this... to fill the voids that are now being filled with kiosks or small bars. All for profit. It becomes a city that, if you don't have money, you don't live in it. And so, the periphery moves further away..." (06BO A); or as stated by another artist living and working in the neighborhood: "The truly absurd gentrification that Bolognina, especially the area behind the station, is undergoing, where they are building enormous technological hubs, the expansion of BolognaFiere… Huge constructions that do not reflect the needs of the residents, instead, they create stress for them and bring benefits only to large structures like foundations and banks" (07BO AC).

Additionally, many artists have reported how the housing crisis in Bologna had worsened significantly over recent years, with increasingly unaffordable rent prices pushing people to move further out of the city: "[…] the problems with rents... Six years ago, when I arrived in Bologna, it was already a problem. Now the situation is exacerbated. This gives you an idea of how, in a short time, the situation has worsened" (13BO A). The growing transformation of housing into short-term rentals like Airbnb exacerbated this issue, particularly in the historic city center: "Houses are not available, so people move further out and instead everything is being transformed... well, into a huge Airbnb." (07BO AC). Some artists also described how the situation might be particularly dire for newcomers to the city, who face difficulties in securing rentals, while highlighting that finding housing was easier in the past, often coinciding with their own arrival in Bologna: "If someone arrives in this city now, maybe from Calabria... and they are twenty years old... they see a city where, yes, maybe they can't find a rental... and this is truly a problem..." (01BO A).

Thematic summary II: Cultural and identity shifts

The second thematic summary, *Cultural and identity shifts*, focuses instead on the changes in Bologna that, according to the artists, have influenced or are influencing predominantly cultural and identity aspects of the city.

According to many artists, there emerged a perceived lack of spaces for free expression. Those who work within cultural processes in relation to local institutions often felt like mere 'instruments' of a broader conception of the city's future, one they aimed to oppose: "Here we are really reduced to being instruments of a vision. Even we, who carry out processes that somehow try to be the exact opposite of this vision." (09BO ACR). This scenario is often complicated by recurring issues such as 'political favoritism': "Bologna, despite being for years a place of democracy, openness, hospitality, and availability... etc., in the end, always comes down to... small problems. In the sense that it's always the same closures, the same skirmishes, the usual political favoritism..." (14BO AC).

The landscape of grassroots collectives in Bologna, a reference *milieu* for the activities of most of the artists interviewed, has also experienced considerable changes: "[...] thirty years ago, forty years ago [...] there were very strong collective bodies. They were the parties, the celebrations of Unity, but also in some ways the parishes, even in some ways the trade unions. So, Bologna obviously cannot be immune from the crumbling - which is happening all over the world - of collective organisms" (08BO A). However, some artists have described the recent emergence of new artistic collectives, organized and often rooted in the idea that traditional art institutions no longer suffice: "Because in recent years, these alliances and collectives have emerged that think in a totally different way. They probably originated with the same idea we had from the beginning: that the institutional world no longer works and that we need another world of art. These collectives are becoming increasingly important and large." (07BO AC). Nevertheless, according to many of the artists who have worked in Bologna for a long time, the city was viewed as still capable to retain its strong grassroots tradition: "[In Bologna] there is, let's say, a substratum... a hard core, made up of many associations, non-profits, APS (associations for social promotion), and foundations that have always worked in the area. And so there is a very strong grassroots tradition, well-funded, but also heavily self-funded... and above all, very much followed by the people." (12BO CR). Yet, this sentiment was counterbalanced by numerous accounts that described a Bologna struggling to keep alive the progressive ideas that many admired in the past: "Lately I see that [Bologna's] progressive spirit, precisely, that I had admired in my doctoral, postdoctoral years... like, about fifteen years ago, at least... That idea, that great ferment... the very progressive idea... has been greatly lost." (03BO ACR). The political landscape has also been described as shifting: "All that system there... which is now disappearing, which in fact is left-wing politics... no longer exists here." (02BO A).

The dynamic of sociocultural fluctuation described so far converges in the accounts of many participants, who reported how Bologna's cultural relevance has

diminished over the years: "In my opinion, there isn't so much [culturally] interesting in recent years... in the Bologna we are living in now. Because there have been changes that have changed the city for the worse. [...] So yes, there are cultural events, proposals, but they are provincial, they are made just for the rest of us. It is not what it was, culturally speaking" (02BO AC). Some artists have described a scenario of cultural stagnation: "[In Bologna] there is undeniably a cultural immobilism." (03BO ACR). The city, once known for generating culture and considering it fundamental to its character, is now described as struggling to maintain that identity, as cultural transformations are often minimal, superficial, and not maintained and articulated by the successive local administrations: "Nothing transforms into cultural change here… you understand? Very little… just a tiny part! Laws exist, but the next year they are gone. They are changed, with so many amendments that they lose their essence" (14BO AC).

Thematic summary III: Community and social dynamics

The third thematic summary, *Community and social dynamics*, describes the fluctuations in community dynamics in Bologna as perceived by the artists, relating these changes to the city's geographical and spatial characteristics.

All the artists interviewed discussed the small, compact size of Bologna as a defining feature of the city's identity, both from a morphological-urban and social perspective. In many cases, the image of the city they conveyed referred solely to the historic center, while in others it extended to include the entire metropolitan area. In any case, its size has been reported as having a significant impact on its social and artistic dynamics. In relation to the urban art worlds of the interviewed artists, the perceived size of the city implied for many that practicing in a 'small community' means that: "[…] everyone knows each other, more or less. So that on the one hand is an advantage, on the one hand it is a disadvantage, because after a while it all becomes the same…" (07BO AC). Moreover, according to some artists, the city's small size can make their local actions seem insignificant on a global scale: "This is a world of three hundred thousand people that nobody knows. In the world, what you do here, it really doesn't matter." (02BO A). This aspect was reported especially by those artists whose artistic practices were predominantly nomadic. Indeed, to many, the Bolognese art world seemed very closed, leading to a sense of constraint for those within it: "Living in Italy is limiting in itself because the art world is already a closed world. The Italian art world is even more closed. The Bolognese art world is even more closed. And every time you are inside it, you feel constrained" (02BO A). However, for others, a dimension where 'many things happen' in a 'small setting' allowed for a more rooted experience of the city, contributing to a sense of attachment: "[Bologna] has a contained size, which is nice because you can embrace the whole city and experience it as a whole, but at the same time, even in a small setting, many things happen... and this makes its richness, from this point of view." (13BO A).

Most of the artists reported a notable increase in social and ideological divisions. These divisions were evident both in the suburbs and in the historic city

center: "There is also a strong division. You see it when you go to the suburbs... but also in the center… The city is so divided" (02BO A). According to one artist, this division is characterized by: "[…] a strong ideologization and [polarization] of points of view" (07BO AC), a sentiment shared by many. This sense of division has been perceived as a longstanding issue. Talking about the recent campaigns by the municipality "trying to erase walls" in an attempt "to erase divisions," an artist told me how: "This seems to be happening now, but it's something that has been in the air for a long time, you know?" (14BO AC).

Thematic summary IV: Institutional and commercial influence

Finally, the fourth thematic summary, *Institutional and commercial influence*, addresses the artists' reflections on how recent changes in Bologna have been shaped by and have impacted the relationship between commercial interests and institutional agendas.

All the artists interviewed described commercialization as an increasingly pervasive phenomenon in Bologna, affecting many aspects of life and local culture. Artistic work has become increasingly focused on marketing, transforming cultural experiences into marketable commodities, as one artist explained: "There has been a leveling in which even the supreme work of art is now communication and territorial promotion. Therefore, 'come to Bologna to see Giulio [Reni],' which is now on the radio as an ad... or 'to see Raffaello.' But the idea is 'consume Bologna!' You don't come here for the exhibition." (04BO AC). Moreover, the city's spaces were described as becoming predominantly commercial: "In Bologna, practically everything has been evicted and you can't have a place that isn't commercial." (07BO AC), and peculiar cultural aspects of Bologna were increasingly seen as: "an economic investment." (12BO CR).

In addition to the rise in cultural commercialization, the increase in tourism was another factor highlighted by nearly all participants. According to the artists, tourism – particularly mass tourism – has dramatically transformed Bologna. For a start, the influx of tourists is a recent phenomenon, as explained by two artists reflecting on the early days of their practice: "Surely tourism is a big change [in Bologna...] tourism wasn't there when we started." (02BO A). "Because the tourism that has been invited here is precisely the most... vulgar, mass tourism, isn't it? [...]", feeling that: "[Bologna] has worsened due to tourism, there is no doubt." (01BO A). Many artists interpreted this shift as a deliberate effort by the local government to transform Bologna into a tourist destination. They often likened the city to other historic Italian cities: "[…] like Florence or Venice. The dynamic of the Municipality is to transform it into a tourist place but that type of tourism. [...] The 'hit-and-run' tourism, that photographs the monument and then maybe looks at it better at home, in a photo..." (06BO A). However, unlike in Venice or Florence, a distinctive aspect of the growing tourism presence in Bologna, highlighted in all the artists' accounts, is the city's emphasis on food: "In the last seven or eight years, the promotion has been primarily through tourism. The number one attraction they have focused on is food" (05BO A).

Most artists have noted this specific focus on food as a key feature of a recent development strategy by the city, marking it as an aspect of discontinuity: branding. According to many, the branding of Bologna has become a significant part of its identity, promoted through the marketing of specific 'concepts of the city,' which are then primarily targeted at tourism. One artist described their perception of this phenomenon, provocatively imagining themselves in the role of the Municipality: "So, I have the concept of the city of Bologna, and I sell it to you. You, the tourist, come... and you come to see something that isn't there, something I spoke very highly of. But objectively, I haven't done anything, I haven't changed anything. It's still the empty city it was before. I've further emptied it of content." (10BO AC). Many artists noted an increased use and 'spectacularization' of cultural figures and local memories for branding, feeling that without proper context, this risks further commercializing the city's image: "Don't put quotes of Lucio Dalla, Pasolini and people who have nothing to do with it! In other words, using them as a purely commercial brand [...]" (02BO A).

Many artists attributed these phenomena to a perceived rise in institutional influence, especially in the cultural sector. This has resulted in the development of extensive "superstructures" that, in their view, risk overshadowing local grassroots initiatives, in that they were seen as being disconnected from the everyday life of the city. In this sense, an artist recounted this phenomenon relating it to the planning of large projects such as the recent 'Polo della Memoria': "I think, for example, of this 'Polo della Memoria' project, which in itself is a very interesting project… and in my opinion, commendable. But the fact that, for example, they think of bringing all the memory institutions to one point in the city… takes away that connection..." (12BO CR), referring to the connection between the specificity of cultural memories and their reference locations in the city – for example, the link between the memory of the Bologna massacre of August 2, 1980, and the Central Station. Many artists also questioned potential forms of collaboration with the Municipality, often emphasizing strong criticism or tension towards an institution perceived as either absent, controlling, or instrumentalizing: "But by making the collaboration agreement for the Municipality, it's the same thing. The Municipality has delegated me to fix it up. So, in the end, I am acting on behalf of the Municipality to fix a space that the Municipality would never have fixed up. Got it?" (03BO ACR). Some artists described recent institutional policies as having the tendency to 'domesticate and control' cultural activities: "[...] a reassuring policy, one that is capable of domesticating. A policy in which people can... somehow make an act of faith in their institutions." (09BO ACR).

4.1.3 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis (SVTA)

Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis (SVTA) is a qualitative analytical method introduced by educational scholars Nicole Brown and Jo Collins in 2021. The SVTA method aims to systematically interconnect visual and textual information and interpretations, blending artifacts with interviews across various

conceptualization levels. SVTA has much in common with ITI. For instance, within this framework, analyzing visuals is understood as an iterative "sense-making process to generate common threads," (Brown and Collins, 2021, p.1276) similarly to what can be done with interview transcripts. Importantly, this approach does not prioritize one mode of communication over another. It does not favor, for instance, textual data over visual data, nor does it view visuals as mere support for texts, or ways into conversation about a specific topic or theme. Instead, visuals and artifacts are considered 'proper' data, as "conversation in and of themselves" (Brown and Collins, 2021, p.1277). SVTA recognizes "the value of metaphors" through which images (of and as artworks) articulate their meanings "as forms of intentional expression" (Lakoff and Johnsons, 2003, and Dewey, 2005, in Brown and Collins, 2021, p.1276). In this sense, "artefacts or objects of art need to be seen for what they are, a form of expression that is "recording, constructive, logical and communicative"" (Dewey, 2005, p.105, in Brown and Collins, 2021, p.1278). Moreover, following this approach, the *experience* of the "perceiver" (Brown and Collins, 2021, p.1278) of both words and artifacts has to necessarily be taken into account – in this case, that of the researcher who is conducting the analysis. Indeed, "it is only through allowing the artefact to create an experience within us, that we are able to truly perceive and make sense of what it is in front of us. The process of perceiving a work of art then is nothing but the object working on and in us to connect our conscious and unconscious personal, individual recollections with the broader, generalized world experiences" (Brown and Collins, 2021, p.1278).

In practice, the analytical process of SVTA progresses from initially observing descriptive elements and concentrating on specific linguistic and artistic aspects, to the development of conceptual themes and thick descriptions (Brown and Collins, 2021), retaining and reproducing phenomenal variety – a characteristic that I deemed well-suited for my study – while still allowing for comparisons and contrasts between different case studies.

According to Brown and Collins, the SVTA method includes six steps divided into two phases of analysis – or *levels* – and three analyzed *elements* (Figure 39). It systematically begins, at Level 1, with *noticing*, then progresses to *describing*, and culminates, at Level 2, in *conceptualizing*, followed by the final *presentation* of the findings.

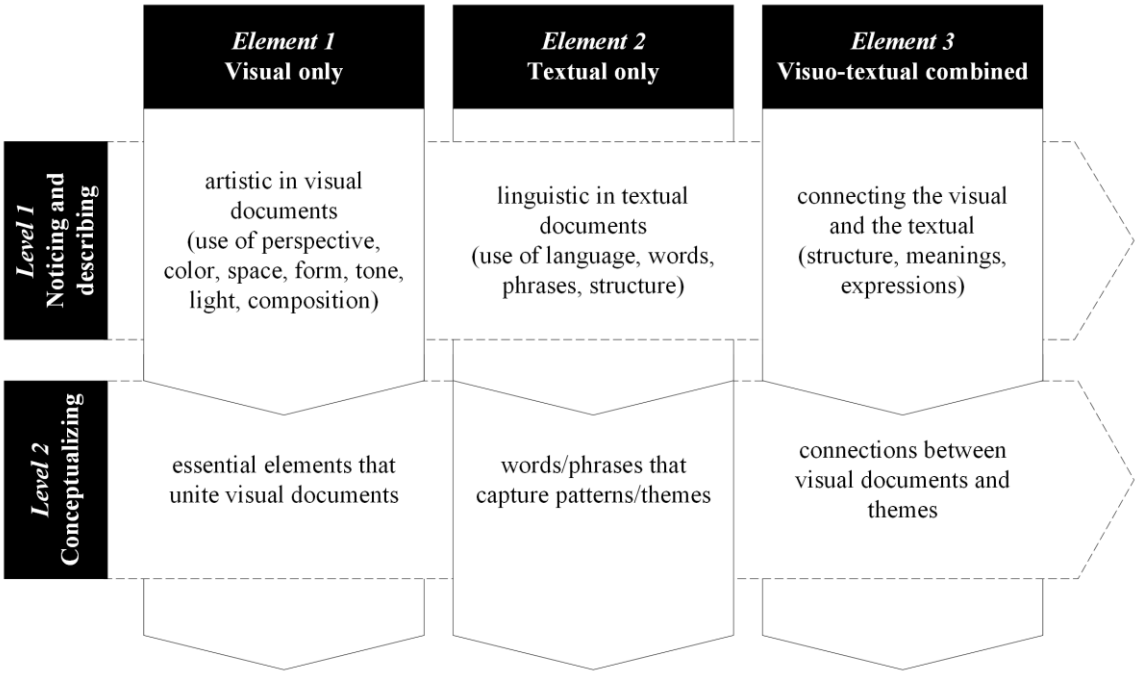


Figure 39: SVTA analysis process as articulated in Levels and Elements of interpretation. Illustration: own work, adapted from Brown and Collins (2021).

In my study, Level 1 and Level 2 analysis proceeded as follows:

Level 1: Noticing and describing

Following data management (as described in Subsection 3.2.7), I conducted a thorough *re-familiarization* with the empirical data concerning the three UAP case studies, moving from visual only to textual only and back, i.e., between Element 1 and 2. This re-familiarization was followed by a stage of further sorting and clustering the gathered documents. Here, I particularly focused on the data gathered from the visual ethnography, i.e., participant generated (PGI) and researcher generated (RGI) visual materials and the SRIs transcriptions, as well as the transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the members of the three practices alone.

While on the one hand I have strictly adhered to the systematic approach of this method, on the other hand I have conducted the Level 1 visual-textual analysis by deviating from - or, more precisely, by adapting - the 'standard' procedure outlined by Brown and Collins. Indeed, in an attempt to reconstruct the CPs underlying the various art-works studied and to capture key aspects of and connections between their materialities, I integrated the spreadsheet-based analysis described by Brown and Collins with the analytical tools specific to my field of study, namely architecture and design. This involved observing, noting, schematizing, and describing the features and contents of the visual dataset through memoing in the form of *drawings*. For example, redrawing (tracing) and schematizing an art-work and its salient properties and relational attributes (such as

lines, shapes, colors, compositions, materials, subject matter, relationships to its site, and the like), either by looking at a single visual document or multiple visual documents together.[37]

In schematizing key elements of the art-works, I gradually introduced a categorization by color, pattern, and line thickness – in what could be defined as a procedure of *visual coding*, as shown in Figure 40. This categorization was designed (1) to visually examine and highlight recurring features and/or discontinuities both among the various visual documents and among the art-works, and (2) to facilitate the subsequent presentation of findings in graphical form at Level 2 of the analysis using SVTA. Indeed, I later reprised and integrated this categorization with the 'thematic' results that emerged from the spreadsheets-based analysis, to create an *explanatory legend* that would guide the 'reading' – and thus, the understanding – of the findings presented in graphical form, as I will explain shortly. To redraw the visual documents, I used the vector graphics software Adobe Illustrator.[38]

All this was done while constantly iterating and revising preliminary interpretations within Level 1 until reaching a point where visual and textual data were approached conjunctly, i.e., Element 3. For example, by pairing extracts from interviews or SRIs with images, photos, schemes, diagrams, and their descriptions. Data sets were thus *weaved* in and out together producing tentative *meaning linkages* between one another, or "common threads," as shown in Figure 39. In this sense, my approach at Level 1 was somewhat similar to the procedures followed using ITI, and this aspect facilitated the interaction with preliminary results from the thematic phase of the overall analysis – the two thematic domains and their thematic summaries reported in Subsection 4.1.2 – as well as the initial transition to SVTA.

[37] A similar interdisciplinary methodology was recently introduced by Arshia Eghbali (2023) in his study of temporary homemaking practices. His proposed approach, the "Perecquian methodology," combines ethnography and visual analysis to provide detailed visual descriptions of material objects and their relationships, as well as the narratives and processes involved in how inhabitants create their domestic spaces. See: Eghbali, A. (2023). Exhausting the Home Interior: A Perecquian Methodology for the Study of Temporary Homemaking. *Space and Culture*, *0*(0).

[38] This can also be done without having to use specialized software like Adobe Illustrator. In fact, software such as Microsoft PowerPoint or even Microsoft Word can be used to create these diagrams.



Figure 40: An example of the visual coding of a photo (PGI) related to the art-work AW18BO. The analysis was performed through redrawing/tracing and synthesis, resulting in a two-dimensional schematization and color coding. Illustration: own work.

Additionally, to critically articulate the process of analysis of visual documents, I further informed it by relying on Gillian Rose's (2001) *critical visual methodology*, which offers three different points of view, or "modalities,"[39] from which we can explore the visual data. Guillemin (2004) operationalized these modalities into several questions, which I used to guide my analysis.

- *Production-Technological*: What materials are selected for the visual document? How is it made? When was it made? Where was it made? Who drew the image? What is the context in which the visual document is produced?
- *Visual-Compositional:* What is featured in the visual document? What is being shown? What are the components of the visual document? How are they arranged? What relationships are established between the components of the image? What do the different components of the visual document signify? What is being represented? What knowledge is being deployed? Whose knowledge is excluded from the representation? Is this a contradictory visual document? (to other data collected, for example, in interviews)

[39] Regarding the concept of modality, an additional reference for the combined analysis of texts and images was the concept of *multimodality* and related methodologies for analyzing multiple literacies within the same medium, as introduced in the seminal works of Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. See: Kress, G., Leeuwen, T. v. (2020). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design.* United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.

- *Relational-Social:* What does the visual document mean within the given social, economic and political context in which it is viewed? Who was the original audience(s) for this visual document? Where is the viewer positioned in relation to the components of the visual document? What relation does this produce between the visual document and its viewers? Is more than one interpretation of the visual document possible? How is it re-displayed?

Now, my use of these modalities – as well as the re-drawing procedures described earlier – was an attempt to maintain a "critical-reflexive openness" and "curiosity" (Brown and Collins, 2021, p.1287) towards the data throughout the analytical process. This approach was certainly important to avoid excluding multiple interpretations, which may have varied or even contradicted each other. However, while I believe that fragmentation, fluctuation, and precariousness of meaning were here to be taken very seriously, they were not necessarily foregrounded, as I believe that one must remain wary of falling into speculative interpretation often implied in the search for something 'beyond' the explicit data.

Level 2a: Conceptualizing

The visuo-textual linkages developed at Level 1 analysis gradually progressed to Level 2, the *conceptualization* stage. At this point, saturation in the analysis was reached. This meant that connections between both source and newly produced visual documents and texts were enough "straightforward" that a "coherent narrative" began to form (Brown and Collins, 2021, p.1286). As outlined by Brown and Collins (2021, p.1282), once I reached this stage the analysis transitioned from individual observations and descriptions of each UAP case study to a holistic in-depth analysis. In other words, a procedure aimed at a highly detailed and comprehensive reconstruction of the CPs of the various art-works analyzed.

In practical terms, this meant *aggregating* all the tentative interpretations I had produced in textual (descriptions, thematic summaries and domains, excerpts from transcriptions and documents) and in visual (drawings, diagrams) form that had emerged up to that point across the three UAP case studies, while informing them with the results from the ITI conducted with the larger cohort of participants. The authors of the method describe the analytic approach at Level 2 as intentionally open, preferring not to prescribe specific procedures for moving from conceptualization to presentation of findings. However, as a guideline for conducting Level 2 conceptualization, Brown and Collins suggest thinking and reflecting particularly on the connections and associations between interpretations, essential elements, patterns, or themes, while addressing questions concerning the different sources of data analyzed (as also noted by Trombeta and Cox, 2022, from whose these questions are directly quoted), such as: *What is in the visual documents that support or reinforce what was learned from the interview data? What is in the visual documents that contradicts what was learned from the interview data? What*

is in the visual documents that is not in the interviews? What is in the interviews that is not in the visual documents?

4.1.4 Introduction to the visuo-textual presentation of the findings

After completing the analysis process at both levels, I chose to organize the presentation of the conceptualization resulting from the SVTA analysis, or the findings, into two interconnected and complementary dimensions.

In the first dimension, (1) I highlighted three different *definitions* (or ways of framing) of artistic practicing in the urban space of Bologna that predominantly emerged from the spreadsheets-based analysis of the datasets, and from their comparison with the thematic domains resulting from the ITI analysis (see Subsection 4.1.2). Each definition is related to a specific case study and the exploration of its art-works. I will briefly list them here: (1) *Interactive objects*, with regards to the practice 01BO - *Antonello Ghezzi*; (2) *Devices*, concerning the practice 04BO – *This Is So Temporary (TIST)*; and (3) *Programs*, related to the practice 06BO - *Serendippo*. I will detail each of these definitions in Sections 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

Regarding the second dimension of the conceptualization resulting from the analysis, (2) I chose to adhere to the adapted version of the SVTA procedure, aiming for a final *visuo-textual presentation of the findings*. At this stage, following the previously developed schemes and visual coding categorization, I focused on assessing the *consistency of the connections and relations* identified between images and texts, both within each art-work and across the three UAP case studies, keeping the aforementioned definitions in mind, which acted as a 'container' of those linkages.

To graphically represent and visualize these connections, I decided to use the language of *process mapping*, another tool widely used in the field of design (e.g., design thinking) to communicate, through a visuo-textual representation, the organization of a workflow, the functioning of a process, or the unfolding of an experience; occurrences that are relevant for all the analyzed art-works. Using this communicative tool allowed me to conceive and present the urban art-works as *spatiotemporal process flows*, in line with the theoretical framework of reference, as well as with the nature and character of the art-works themselves. This approach ultimately produced complex visuo-textual *process diagrams* (or flowcharts) that merged the schemes, the images, and short written notes associated with each art-work, by defining both the emergent *artistic relationships* between those elements via process arrows (vectors), and the temporal progression of the art-works' CPs.

An integral element of each process diagram is the *explanatory legend* resulting from the visual coding procedure, which involved categorizing key aspects and features of the various art-works by color, pattern, and line thickness, along with their relationship to their urban sites in Bologna and the artists' perceptions of the city's transformation. It is important to note here that the legend

represents a 'thematic' outcome of the analysis. Indeed, its different entries identify, in the form of thematic categories, recurring *modes* of the creative processes underlying the various urban art-works of the UAPs studied. Hence, these modes are intrinsic to the art-works themselves.

The thematic categories contained in the explanatory legend cut across the artistic production of the three UAPs. This aspect represents an attempt to 'generalize' the results of the analysis, as it highlights common and/or recurring strategies in artistic practicing within urban space. However, it must be recalled that the modes that have emerged are specific to each individual art-work and, moreover, to the city of Bologna alone. Therefore, they must be read and understood within the particular development of each art-work's CP in its specific urban context. I refer the reader to Chapter 3, Subsection 3.1.3, for a discussion of my approach to generalization in this study. Moreover, these modes go beyond mere 'themes' and should be understood as guides for comprehending the dense visuo-textual descriptions of the art-works.

In conceptualizing the modes of the art-work that emerged from the SVTA analysis, I drew, on the one hand, from the concepts and terminology found in the literature, particularly the foundational theories of the study. On the other hand, the conceptualization incorporated the preliminary results already obtained from the ITI analysis (Subsection 4.1.2), specifically the two thematic domains: *Perspectives on artistic practice and the urban art-work* and *Perspectives on Bologna and its transformation*. This approach effectively brought the results of the two analytical strands into close communication – essentially triangulating the findings.

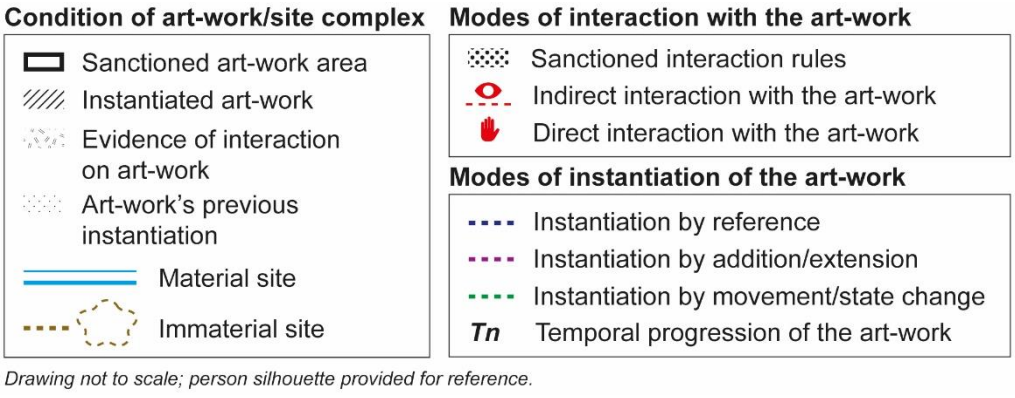


Figure 41: The process diagram's explanatory thematic legend.

I have organized the explanatory legend into three main *thematic classes*. Referring to the three panels in Figure 41, from left to right and top to bottom, these classes pertain to: the (1) *Condition of the 'art-work/site' complex*, the (2) *Modes of interaction with the art-work*, and the (3) *Modes of instantiation of the art-work*.

Regarding the (1) *Condition of the 'art-work/site' complex*:

- *Sanctioned art-work area*: the specific physical or conceptual space designated for the art-work, as sanctioned by the artists. This area is defined

and regulated by rules and parameters that outline where, when, and how the art-work exists, can be presented, or interacted with.

- *Instantiated art-work*: a particular realization of the art-work at a specific moment in time and space. This instantiation embodies both the physical and conceptual aspects of the art-work through its sanctioned material and immaterial components.
- *Evidence of interaction on the art-work*: visible or tangible indicators that show how audiences have engaged with the art-work. This includes any changes, modifications, or responses resulting from public interaction, such as physical alterations, additional elements, or other traces.
- *Art-work's previous instantiation*: a prior realization of the art-work that varies from other instantiations in terms of time, location, and contextual elements.
- *Material site*: the physical urban location or support where the art-work exists or is interacted with. This includes tangible elements of the city of Bologna or physical structures, and is where the art-work physically resides (temporally or permanently) and where people encounter it.
- *Immaterial site*: the conceptual or thematic context associated with the art-work, encompassing abstract ideas, cultural references, or intangible elements that influence its interaction, presentation, and interpretation. This site operates on two levels: a supralocal level, referring to abstract concepts beyond the city of Bologna; and a local level, concerning concepts related to Bologna's specificities (such as historical events, neighborhoods, or particular sites). The immaterial site also includes the themes, narratives, and frameworks shaping the art-work's meaning and reception that go beyond its physical presence.

About the (2) *Modes of interaction with the art-work*:

- *Sanctioned interaction rules*: formal or informal guidelines established by the artists that dictate how audiences should interact with the art-work. These rules define either mandatory, acceptable, desired, or suggested actions, behaviors, and interactions, ensuring that the art-work is experienced as intended. They may be communicated through signage, documentation, or embedded within the art-work itself.
- *Indirect interaction with the art-work*: engagement with the art-work that occurs passively or non-directly, such as through observation, incidental encounters, or peripheral involvement. This type of interaction does not involve direct manipulation or alteration of the art-work but focuses on how it is perceived and experienced from a distance or through non-tangible means. Indirect interaction may still be sanctioned by the artists.
- *Direct interaction with the art-work*: active engagement with the art-work involving physical manipulation, modification, or bodily participation by the audience. This interaction results in immediate and observable changes or responses, such as altering the art-work's appearance, functionality, or

context. Direct interaction emphasizes the audience's firsthand involvement and influence on the art-work, and is often sanctioned by the artists.

Lastly, concerning the (3) *Modes of instantiation of the art-work*.

- *Instantiation by reference*: a mode of instantiation where the art-work, or a partial instantiation of it, is realized through connections to or between concepts or elements within itself, such as between sanctioned rules of interaction and material components of the work. It may also occur through linkages to or by being derived from previous versions, creating continuity, divergence, or dialogue with past iterations.
- *Instantiation by addition/extension*: a mode of instantiation where new elements or features are incorporated into the existing art-work, or a partial instantiation of it, expanding or extending it by altering its original components or elements, and thus its properties.
- *Instantiation by movement/state change*: a mode of instantiation involving the transformation or alteration of the art-work or its elements' state or location. This includes physical relocation, changes in the art-work's configuration, or shifts in its operational state.
- *Temporal progression of the art-work*: the chronological development of the art-work over time, including changes in its form, context, or presentation across different instantiations or within a single instantiation. Temporal progression is marked in the process diagrams with time indicators such as T0 (usually referring to the inception of the art-work), T1, T2, T3, etc. Each time mark is accompanied by labels like 'START,' 'END,' 'START or END,' and 'START and END,' which identify the initial and final moments of the art-work's CP, as well as moments where the start and end may either coincide or alternate.

What follows in the next three sections (Section 4.2, Section 4.3, and Section 4.4) are the results of the entire *iterative visual-textual analysis* process. Overall, for each UAP case study, the presentation of the visuo-textual findings is inseparably composed of:

- An introduction to the UAP;
- The definition associated with the specific way of artistic practicing in the urban space of Bologna by the UAP (i.e., Interactive objects; Devices; Programs);
- A snapshot introducing each analyzed art-work or each of its instantiations;
- The process diagrams of the art-works and their CPs, including the explanatory thematic legend repeated in each diagram;
- Detailed and exhaustive textual descriptions of the art-works and their CPs, as represented in the process diagrams, complemented by excerpts from the SRIs' transcriptions.

4.2 Case study 01BO – *Antonello Ghezzi*: Interactive objects

The UAP *Antonello Ghezzi* was founded in Bologna in 2009 by two artists I will refer to as 01BO A and 02BO A. Although they grew up in different regions of Italy (Veneto and Emilia-Romagna), both artists studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna. It was there that they met and showed their early interest in the "art system", which was reflected in their very first art-works as a practice. This is what they told me about their beginnings as an artistic practice:

> "We tell ourselves an idea… which is to make a blitz at Arte Fiera, the main art fair of Bologna. A blitz… in the sense that we wanted to be part of the art system without ever being invited... It was an idea that both of us had, to make this foray into the bathroom [of the fair]. Because the bathroom was, in our opinion, the place where... sort of a neutral space, where there are no galleries, spaces are not paid for. And so, there was somehow room for this incursion. Discovering that we both had this idea, we decided to do it together. So, this performance was the beginning of our artistic activity." (01BO A)

The practice has produced and exhibited its works internationally. The practice was mainly composed of the two founding artists and was organized as a duo.

UAP code	Art-work code	Site	Art-work expressions	Art-work placing	Art-work mobility	Art-work temporality	Time
01BO	AW01BO *Io e Te*	Palazzina Liberty at the Giardini Margherita	Installation	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	8 to 10/07/2016
	AW02BO *La Palazzina dei Sogni*		Installation Performance				2024 UNR

Table 8: Case study 01BO: Urban art-works and related Urban sites (from Bologna, Italy).

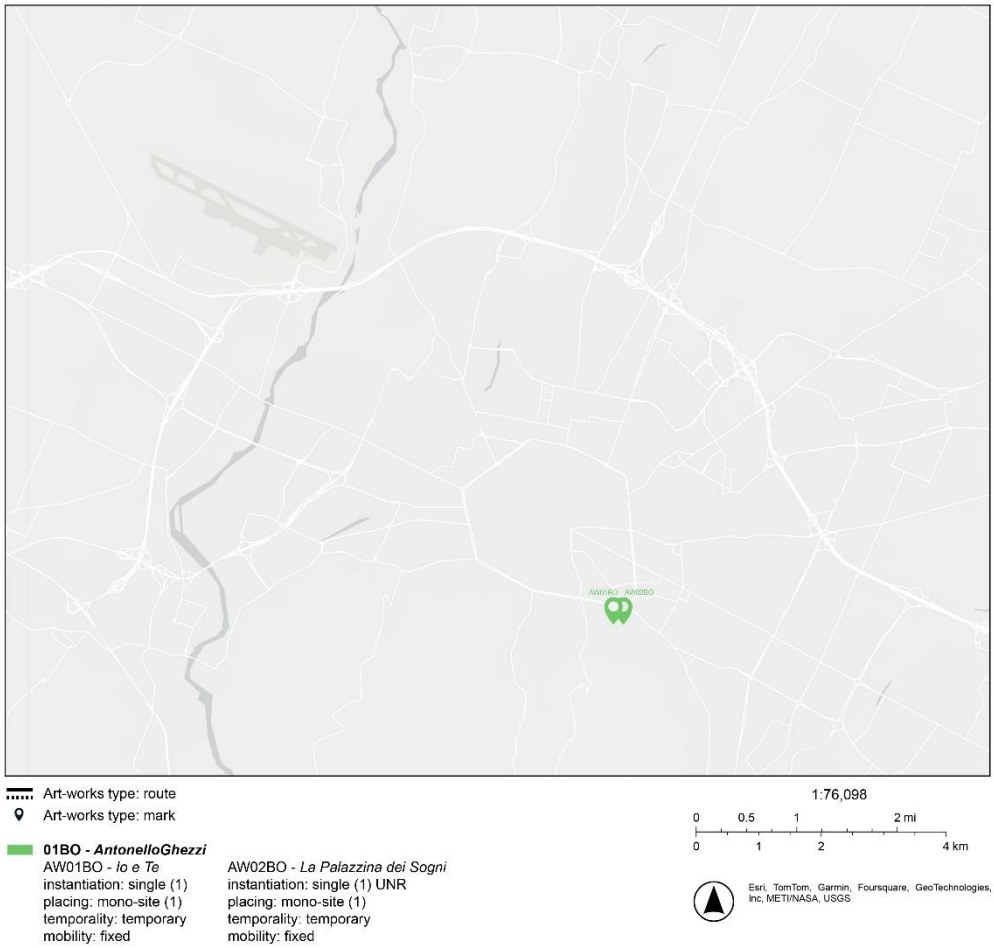


Figure 42: Case study 01BO: map of Urban art-works and related Urban sites; focus at Municipality of Bologna level (from Bologna, Italy). Illustration: own work.

During my initial interaction with the artists, I observed that a predominant aspect of their practice was studio work carried out indoors, in their spaces located in a historic building dating back to the early 1900s, the *Palazzina Libery,* located in the Giardini Margherita. This aspect significantly distinguished their practice from the other two cases analyzed, 04BO and 06BO. I found it particularly relevant to consider a UAP case that had such a pronounced aspect related to practicing in a studio setting.

In addition, a similarity and difference with the other UAPs I studied was represented by the common background of both artists, who were trained in the visual arts.

A second point of interest was that the practice was not only active in Bologna, but also in various other cities worldwide, with a particular focus on the Italian and Lebanese contexts. Some of the cities where the firm has worked over the years were Beirut, New York City, Bergen, Madrid, Buenos Aires and Rome. I thought it relevant to take this aspect into consideration, as it could better highlight the specific relationship of these artists' practice to the city of Bologna, as well as their particular understanding of its transformation. In addition, it offered

opportunities for comparison with other contexts, revealing similarities and contrasts.

A third point of interest related to what could be called the 'direction' of the practice's production, which was evident in a body of art-works aimed at both urban public spaces and private collectors. The practice embraced the creation of both spontaneous and commissioned art-works, the latter funded by both private individuals and cultural institutions. However, there seemed to be a certain balance between these two types of artistic production. These aspects also contrast with the other two UAPs studied, as will be discussed in the following chapters.

A fourth point of interest related to the themes explored by the artistic 'research' of the practice, which were predominantly directed towards a dimension of what they described as “universal.” In this sense, recurring themes were seemingly generic, such as 'the sky', 'stars', 'lightness', 'magic', or 'relationships'. However, many of their art-works, especially those directed towards urban public spaces, exhibited strong characteristics of specificity in relation to the sites for which they are created. This specificity *indicated* (i.e., made reference to) and interacted primarily with the material aspects of the urban sites in which the artists intervened.

A fifth and final point of interest concerned the nature of the practice's work. Specifically, the forms and artistic media primarily employed in the production of their art-works.

The artists frequently utilized temporary and single-instantiation installations and performances in the creation of art-works within urban spaces, resulting in what could be described as *Interactive objects*. With these art-works, the artists sanctioned public interaction as part of the media profile of the works themselves. (Caldarola, 2020, p.25; Irvin, 2022) This called for a closer examination of their production process. While the practice seemed to lean towards the creation of physical objects rather than the development of processes, a certain processuality was still evident in the interactive nature of these objects. This was manifested in the differently regulated and sanctioned interaction between the public and the art-work, as well as in the temporary nature of the interaction itself. As a result, these objects could be understood as 'taking place (or having taken place)' rather than 'being realized.' The artistic media most commonly employed by the practice during the CP were diverse and predominantly physical. These included fluorescent or luminescent light bars, lamps, mirrors, blue aerosol paints, acrylic paints, soap bubbles with various pigments, plastic fiber fabrics, as well as electronic or mechanical devices such as video screens, sliding doors, and open-source hardware such as Arduino. In addition, found objects have been used to a lesser extent, as will be particularly evident in the artwork AW01BO *‘Io e Te’.*

I followed the work of the *Antonello Ghezzi* practice from the beginning of my fieldwork in November 2022 until January 2024, the date of the last SRI session with the artists. In fact, *Antonello Ghezzi* was the first UAP I contacted and met in Bologna. During this period, the artists were actively engaged in the creation of most of the art-works that we subsequently explored both during the semi-structured interview and through visual ethnography.

One of the art-works considered for analysis was unfinished – AW02BO – *'La Palazzina dei Sogni'* (Figure 46). The other art-work considered – AW01BO – *'Io e Te*' (Figure 44) – was completed (or 'took place') in 2016. For the first art-work, AW02BO, I had the opportunity to explore different stages of its CP, mainly through SRI sessions and relevant visual material, while for AW01BO I relied mainly on the semi-structured interview and visual material. This analytical focus on unfinished or ongoing art-works was a unique aspect compared to the work of the other two UAPs.

The artists' studio represented the central setting in this case study, around which many of my field activities related to the work of this practice ultimately revolved.



Figure 43: An old photograph of the Palazzina Liberty, kept by the artists in their studio, captures the building during a car race event held at the Giardini Margherita. December 2024. Photo: own work (RGI).

The *Palazzina* became, over time and through continuous interaction with the artists' work, one of the recurring subjects of our meetings and conversations. The building, which dates back to 1910 and is located in the Giardini Margherita in the Santo Stefano district, has undergone several transformations. Originally a restaurant, café and reception hall, then a library and a small astronomical observatory, and then partially unused, it was transformed into the artists' studio in 2014-2015 after winning the *IncrediBol!* cultural initiative promoted by the Municipality of Bologna, which aims to allocate spaces for temporary and free use to local creative enterprises.

Through the art-works AW01BO and AW02BO, the artists engaged with the specific site of the Palazzina, albeit in different ways, as will be explored in detail.

4.2.1 AW01BO and AW02BO – The *Palazzina* works: *Io e Te* and *La Palazzina dei Sogni*

Snapshot: AW01BO – 'Io e Te' (instantiation 2016)

The art-work AW01BO – *'Io e Te'* took place between July 8 and 10, 2016, as part of *La Cura - Il Festival*, a cultural event organized by a local art collective based in the Giardini. The artists proposed this temporary interactive installation, which utilized the scaffolding surrounding the Palazzina Liberty. The scaffolding had been in place since 2015 for the restoration of the building's facade, a project that had not yet begun at the time of my fieldwork. The art-work featured two main elements: a group of thirteen pedestals made from yellow-painted wooden planks, sourced from the scaffolding and arranged on the ground in front of it, and fifteen spherical streetlamp hats salvaged from the old streetlamps at the Giardini Margherita. These hats were suspended from the scaffolding. Sensors embedded in the wooden pedestals activated the light bulbs in the streetlamp hats upon contact with a hand, but only when two pedestals were touched simultaneously by two people who completed the circuit by holding hands.



Figure 44: Art-work AW01BO '*Io e Te*' and its site, the Palazzina Liberty. July 2016. Source: the artists (PGI).

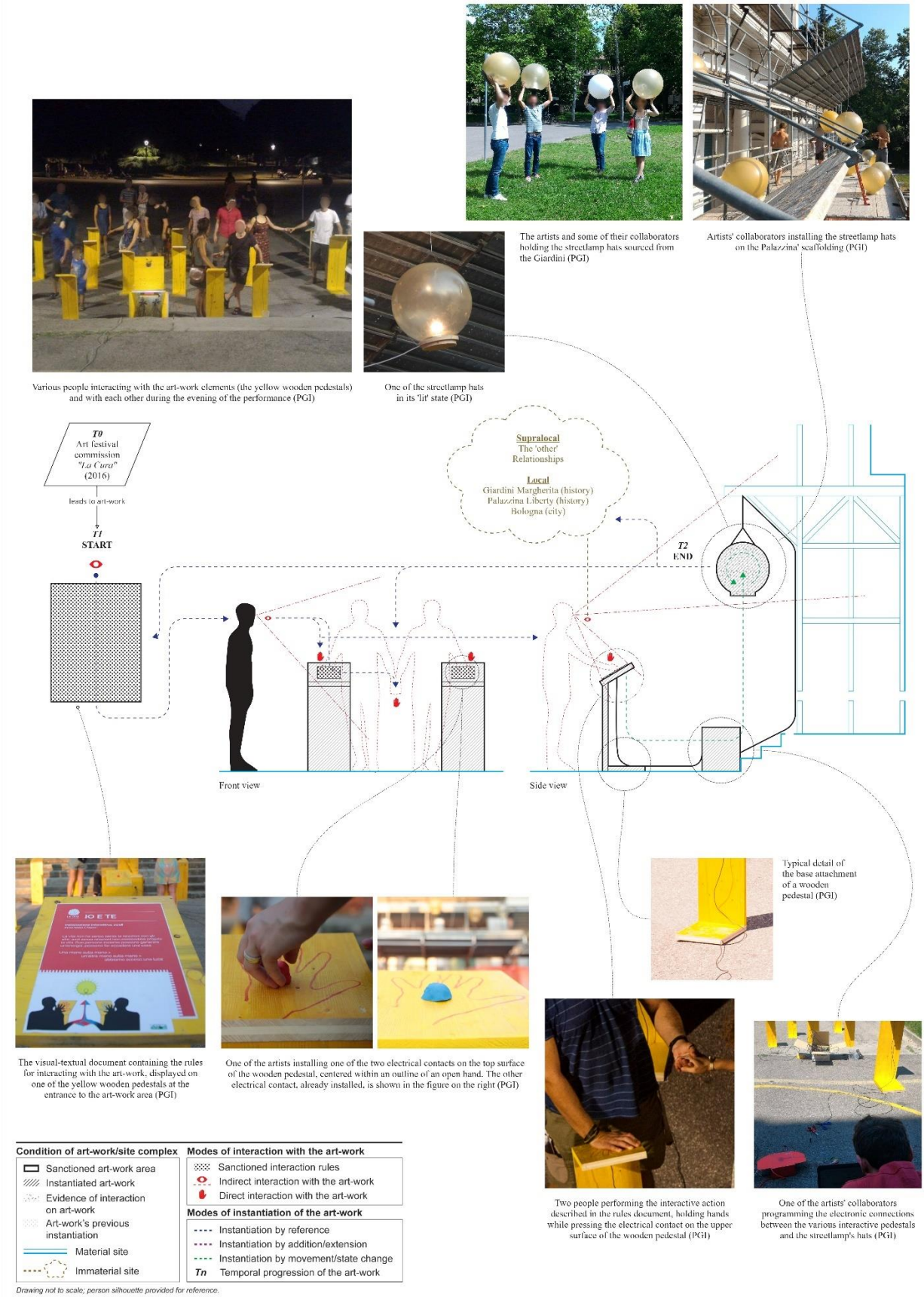


Figure 45: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the art-work AW01BO *'Io e Te'* rendered via a process flow diagram. (High definition diagram in Appendix A).

The art-work AW01BO – *'Io e Te'* began (T0) with a commission from the organizers of *La Cura – Il Festival*, held from July 8th to 10th, 2016, at Giardini Margherita. The two artists mentioned that the creation of the art-work was particularly rushed and constrained by budget limitations:

> "It was done less to create a work as we do now... It was done just to get it done..." (02BO A) "Out of necessity... because they had halved our budget." (01BO A).

Despite these challenges, they highlighted how collaboration played a crucial role in overcoming obstacles and contributed a "spontaneity" to the art-work, which they felt was increasingly rare in their recent projects:

> "There was an important technological aspect that we didn't know how to handle... people helped us with welding, that guy who lived on that street..." (01BO A) "That was the beauty of it..." (02BO A) "Everyone pitched in." (01BO A) "Without everyone's help, we wouldn't have accomplished anything... we had a great idea, very little money, and little time... but in the end... [...] seeing it work was beautiful... and the atmosphere was beautiful as well" (02BO A).

The ideation process for the art-work followed a common practice for the artists, occurring almost entirely through verbal communication. They engaged in a continuous and reciprocal exchange and revision of ideas and proposals. They mentioned that they rarely rely on drawings or sketches to develop a new work. This visual component was only occasionally introduced during the material construction phases, such as when it became necessary to consult with those responsible for physically building the piece:

> "We talk, we discuss it... so that phase is never documented... almost never. Of course, because, you know, it's just us... chatting... there's never anyone else with us at that moment, absolutely never..." (01BO A) "The drawing is already the end... There isn't that process that leads to the end... it's just this, here we are. She and I... or we're out here... chatting... It's all entirely... verbal..." (02BO A) "Yes, because you... it means that you've already... I mean, we've already talked it out... so we've visualized it at least in our two minds... but in telling each other about it, it took shape, albeit an imaginative shape..." (01BO A) "The drawing is for showing it to others..." (02BO A).

This ideation process led to the creation of the two essential elements of the art-work: the pedestals and the light bulbs. The physical form of these bulbs appeared to be influenced by the urban setting of the art-work, which was, to some extent, a natural outcome of the Festival's location at Giardini Margherita. The artists further contextualized the art-work by choosing to install it on the asphalt

square in front of the Palazzina Liberty (Piazzale Mario Jacchia), where their studio was located. This choice seemed to be connected to the visibility of their practice in relation to its operating location. However, the final site selection was also shaped by their encounter with fifteen of the park's distinctive streetlamp hats, which were about to be removed.

> "Those lamps are the streetlamps of the Giardini..." (02BO A).

The artists decided to salvage these streetlamp hats, bring them to their studio inside the Palazzina, and incorporate them as an integral part of the art-work, thereby giving physical substance to the concept of the light bulbs.

> "We went outside... because we saw this little truck dismantling the lights... the fixtures... from the terrace... but then we ran down and said: 'What are you doing?' 'Oh, we're removing them... because we're replacing them with LED lights...' So, we said – because they were so beautiful... – 'And what will you do with them?' 'Oh, we're going to throw them away...' So, we asked: 'Can we take them?' And they gave them to us...!" (02BO A) "We took them... because they were beautiful... we parked them here... because having space helps..." (01BO A) "It sure was a piece of the history of the Giardini..." (02BO A).

The idea to install the light elements on the scaffolding surrounding the historic building, each containing a light bulb, emerged from the recovery of the streetlamp hats and the placement of the art-work in front of the Palazzina. The reference to the scaffolding, or the integration of the art-work with the physical site, is also evident in the tangible medium chosen by the artists to give form to the thirteen pedestals: rough spruce wood planks coated with a film of yellow melamine resin, typically used for creating walkways on scaffolding or as formwork for concrete pours. While the streetlamp hats were hung at various heights on the scaffolding structure, the wooden pedestals were arranged in four parallel rows on the square, all facing the Palazzina's façade.

During the material definition of the essential elements of the art-work and its relationship with the site (i.e., the sanctioned art-work area), the artists sanctioned the installation's functionality, shaping the work as an interactive object characterized primarily by direct guided actions: 'turning on a light by holding hands and pressing a sensor.' A sanctioned level of indirect interaction with the art-work is also evident, for instance, when observing the light inside the streetlamp hats turning on. Interaction was further sanctioned as a central aspect of the art-work's media profile, beginning with the installation of the work's elements at the site, made possible through collaboration with those close to the artists. As expressed by the artists in a post on the UAP's Facebook page, dated July 9, 2016:

> "The preparations continue! Our idea is to communicate that to change things, to improve, you need others, and the more there are, the more

> everything is possible, and the preparation [of the art-work] is proof of this; in fact, it is already the work itself!"

To make the art-work 'functional,' meaning to activate its elements, the artists introduced an interface consisting of a set of sensors connected to electronic circuits programmed through Arduino. This system linked pairs of pedestals with a single streetlamp. Each pedestal was equipped with a sensor on its top panel, with the sensors in each pair identified by two pieces of red and blue plasticine. Additionally, the artists drew the outline of an open hand around each sensor. As the artists explained to me:

> "It was necessary... only two, because... you see, some are blue, others are red... so both had to be pressed... but they were never so close that you could activate them with two hands... that is, the same person could never activate both alone... and so the electricity passed through two bodies, in the sense that... This one is blue, he's pressing the red one, and the light turns on because the two of them... If they let go, the light goes out..." (01BO A) "The more people there were... the more lights turned on... [...] If there were two of you, you could turn on one light... the more people there were, the more lights turned on... so you could turn them all on when everyone was connected..." (02BO A) "To turn them all on, you had to go find someone... or wait for someone to arrive..." (01BO A).

Overall, the artists publicly communicated their intentions regarding the instantiation process of the art-work in the following manner:

> "We thought of using the scaffolding that has surrounded and hidden the beauty of the building for a year now as support, transforming it with light. In the same way, we salvaged the old fixtures of the streetlamps that for many years lit up our walks in this park. Just recently replaced with new LED lamps, they continue their life by becoming an interactive installation that lights up with the presence of people. And perhaps, these streetlamps that have witnessed generations of citizens pass by—lovers, runners, children, cyclists, skaters, and thinkers—will be happy to have changed position after so many years." (from a text prepared by the artists to promote the art-work on their social networks).

In line with these intentions, the artists eventually drafted in tangible form the already sanctioned rules that would guide the public's interaction with the art-work during the Festival. These rules were presented as a visual-textual document, an A4 sheet of paper with the Festival's name at the top, followed by a brief text describing the interaction modalities with the work:

> *Life has no meaning without relationships with others; in fact, without relationships, life wouldn't exist at all. Two people together can generate energy, they can make something happen.*

A hand on a hand >
another hand on a hand >
we've turned on a light

At the conclusion of the art-work's ideation, the artists created an illustration that depicted the desired interaction with the art-work and the direct actions required to achieve it, exemplified in graphic form. In this context, both the text and the illustration, along with the outline of the open hand drawn on the top panel of each pedestal, functioned as guides for direct interaction with the art-work, specifically through the action of placing the palm of the hand on the sensor. The artists positioned the sheet of paper containing the rules on the top panel of one of the thirteen pedestals, which served as the 'entrance' to the installation, representing the first material element of the art-work that participants would encounter, preceding the four rows of pedestals. The rules, embodied in the A4 paper and the hand outline on the panel, are considered integral components of the art-work's media profile, alongside physical elements such as the wooden pedestals and the streetlamp hats.

The complete instantiation of the art-work, which took place between 7:00 PM and 11:30 PM on July 10, 2016, was publicly announced by the artists on the UAP's Facebook page, reflecting the artists' initial intentions. Regarding the material elements of the urban site integrated into the art-work, they wrote:

> "*Io e Te* was inaugurated last night, and together we transformed this useless scaffolding into a work of art, brought new life to the historic streetlamps of Giardini Margherita, held hands, marveled, smiled, and felt moved. We're already back here today and waiting for you." (Facebook post dated July 10, 2016).

Snapshot: AW02BO – 'La Palazzina dei Sogni' (instantiation 2024)

The art-work AW02BO – *'La Palazzina dei Sogni'* also utilized the scaffolding surrounding the Palazzina Liberty. At the time of my fieldwork with this practice, from late 2022 to early 2024, the art-work was still in progress. The artists envisioned it as a "gift to the city," aimed at encapsulating their artistic research. This temporary installation, which was planned to be dismantled along with the scaffolding after the restoration, combined two elements salvaged from previous works by the artists: *'Under the Same Sky,'* a large sheets of plastic fabric with digital prints depicting a collage of starry skies over various cities worldwide, which were stretched across the front facade of the scaffolding; and *'Shooting Stars,'* a long light bar connected to the Bologna Medicina Radio Telescope, programmed to flash every time a meteorite passed over the Mediterranean.



Figure 46: Art-work AW02BO '*La Palazzina dei Sogni*' and its site, the Palazzina Liberty, in two different concepts drafted by the artists. November 2022 (top) and December 2022 (bottom). Source: the artists (PGI).



The figure on the left shows the site of the art-work, the front facade of the Palazzina Liberty at Giardini Margherita, shown with the scaffolding from the renovation work, without the art-work. The figure on the right, a digital sketch/concept produced by the artists, shows the same site with the art-work installed on the scaffolding. (PGI)

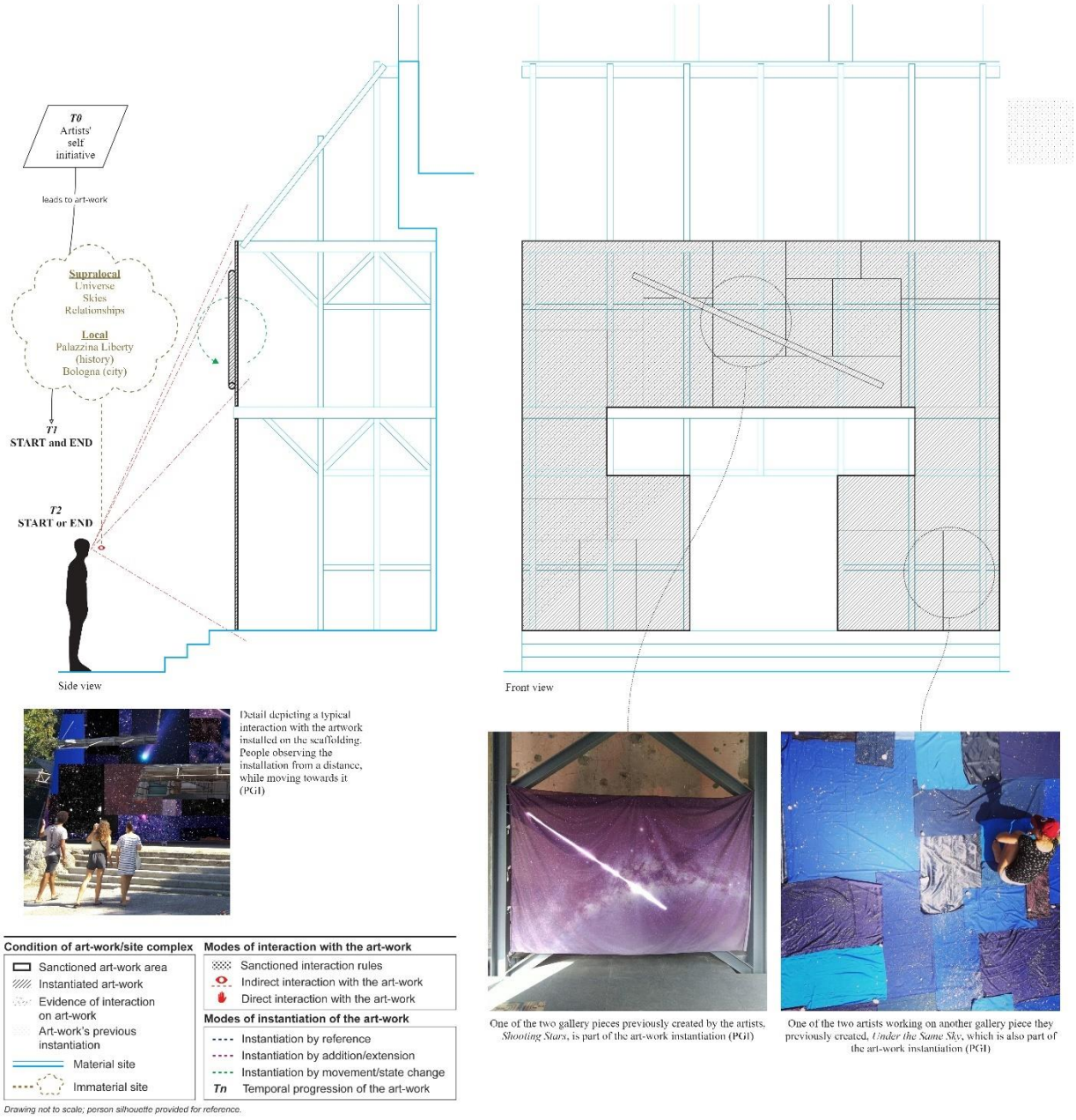


Figure 47: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the art-work AW02BO *'La Palazzina dei Sogni'* rendered via a process flow diagram. (High definition diagram in Appendix B).

The art-work AW02BO – *'La Palazzina dei Sogni'* began (T0) as a self-initiated piece by the two artists. During our conversations, they were unable to recall an exact date or specific chronological period for the beginning of the art-work. However, the visual-textual documentation I gathered, particularly a document prepared to present the art-work to the Municipality of Bologna for approval, is dated November 18, 2022. Additionally, the artists mentioned that an idea related to using the scaffolding for an "art project" or "intervention" (terms they used to describe the art-work) had already been discussed with municipal officials "years ago" (relative to the date of our first interview, which also took place in November 2022). It is therefore plausible to assume that the origin and ideation of the work, which followed a similar development process to that of art-work AW01BO through continuous verbal exchanges of ideas and proposals between the two artists, dates back several years prior to this date.

As of the time of writing this text (summer 2024), the art-work exists solely in the form of three digital renderings and the aforementioned document. In other words, the art-work has only been partially instantiated. The instantiation I have outlined in the process diagram in Figure 47 should thus be understood, in the specific case of this art-work, as being based on this partial instantiation and as an attempt at a speculative reconstruction of its complete instantiation. This reconstruction draws on the recovery and analysis of information from transcripts of interviews with the artists, in which they articulated their intentions regarding both the creation of the art-work and the modes of interaction with it.

Regarding the input that led to the ideation of the art-work, the artists shared:

> "Since, anyway, they [the officials of the Municipality of Bologna] receive queries every week from everyone... because it's a disgrace that this scaffolding, blah-blah... and the work that never starts... they asked us... because it was something we had proposed years ago, but we thought it would be forgotten... But now that they really need to do something, we asked them: Can we do an artistic intervention on this scaffolding, to make it a bit more... pleasant? Of course, they responded: these artists want to make a decoration! But what we proposed is... There are those prints on scaffolding... The ones that show the architecture underneath... Digital prints. [Let's make] a huge collage of starry skies from all over the world." (01BO A)

Starting from this generating input, through which the artists sanctioned the area of the art-work in relation to the site, the essential elements that would later compose the work in its entirety gradually emerged. As explained by the artists, the first essential element that surfaced was the digital print representing a collection of starry skies "over different cities of the world" (01BO A), intended to cover the front façade of the Palazzina Liberty. In one of the three digital renderings, a version of the art-work is visible in which only this digital print is present. The selection of skies to include in the collage was apparently random:

> "We chose random spots, some very famous cities, others by simply… placing a finger on the globe." (02BO A) Some of the cities included are: "Damascus… […] Then there are also those from São Paulo, Nairobi, Bari, Bucharest, Leiria… […] Also from Jerusalem, Guadalupe…" (01BO A) "Cities from all continents… […] like Kabul, places where things happen that make you reflect… but really, the sense of being in the world." (02BO A)

It is interesting to note how the artists sanctioned the correspondence between the sky and an urban settlement, such as a city, rather than a more generic or broader geographical area. However, the sky over the city of Bologna, or its representation, was not included in the art-work. The artists determined that it was unnecessary to include it because:

> "You just have to look up… […] We never considered the sky of Bologna." (02BO A).

This decision implies that the physical sky above the geographical point where the Palazzina with the scaffolding, and thus the art-work, is located should be considered an integral part of the material site, on par with the Palazzina itself. A subsequent step in the ideation process integrated this first essential element with an additional component: a light bar that flashes on and off intermittently. The two essential elements described here correspond to two previous works created by the artists for exhibition in private galleries: the starry sky collage corresponds to the work *'Under the Same Sky,'* while the light bar corresponds to the work *'Shooting Stars.'* In the presentation document for the art-work, the artists described these two works as follows:

> "*Shooting Stars.* A work created in collaboration with the Medicina Radio Telescope (BO), in which a beam of light suddenly lights up with the live passage of a shooting star. The meteors that crash above the Mediterranean area are numerous, almost 50 in an hour, and for this wish-making machine, it's confirmation that it's always time to dream."

And:

> "*Under the Same Sky.* A work created as a digital print, composed of a large collage of starry skies from around the world, showcasing the different shades of blue, the gradations of the sky, and how the stars appear around the world. It is a reflection on our being part of the universe, inviting us to reflect together as humanity under the same sky, without barriers or divisions."

The artists only partially sanctioned the physical media necessary for the realization of the two components of the art-work. However, based on the artists'

intentions and the materials previously used in the creation of the two works integrated into this art-work, it is likely that the medium used to give physical form to the digital print of the starry skies would be sanctioned by the artists as a plastic material commonly employed for making advertising banners, such as PVC. As for the light bar, according to the presentation document of the piece prepared by the artists, it would materialize as a cylindrical plastic bar containing a white LED strip inside. As a result, the partially instantiated art-work exists solely in the form of the concept: 'two works by *Antonello Ghezzi* united into one and installed on the scaffolding on the front façade of the Palazzina Liberty.'

No rules have been established for direct interaction with the art-work. Additionally, even indirect interaction with the art-work is not guided by specific rules sanctioned by the artists. However, in the presentation document, the artists planned a presentation event for the art-work to the city, as well as a press release to promote the work once a complete instantiation has been realized. I have therefore interpreted these two actions as an intent to familiarize the public with the art-work and, consequently, to sanction its public understanding through indirect interaction—such as visiting the Palazzina to observe or explore it.

4.3 Case study 04BO – *This Is So Temporary*: Devices

The UAP *This Is So Temporary (TIST)* was founded in Bologna in January 2020 by two artists I will refer to as 06BO A and 07BO AC. Both artists had an academic background in art. 06BO A was born and raised in the Bolognese area and studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence. On the other hand, 07BO AC, who was born and raised in Russia, first studied communication sciences before moving on to artistic and curatorial practice. Their collaborative practice began during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a result of a convergence of the artists' creative visions and intentions.

> "[…] we started applying for grants, opportunities to exhibit [our work] ... until a couple of years ago when it became more substantial, more... like, other people joined, painters and non-painters. And from there, we created a collective called TIST, with which to reason about social practices, let's say... not so much the artwork itself as an artifact, but as an experience. Very briefly." (06BO A)

The artistic practice was primarily focused on creating works with a social, political and participatory character in the urban context of Bologna. However, they also engaged in projects in other European cities through artistic residencies.

The practice was led by the two founding artists, who also worked independently in the fields of sculpture and curatorship. Over time, they collaborated with four local artists who eventually became integral members of UAP, leading to its organization as a collective.

UAP code	Art-work code	Site	Art-work expressions	Art-work placing	Art-work mobility	Art-work temporality	Time
04BO	AW11BO *Farò*	From former warehouse in Rastignano to Via del Paleotto	Performance Curatorial Visual art	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	28/01/2024
			Installation Curatorial			Permanent	28/01/2023
	AW12BO *Anti-monument A Living Unit*	Parking lot in Via Serrabella	Installation Performance	Multi-site	Mobile	Temporary	31/12/2021
		Former commercial space in Via Eugenio Curiel	Installation				29/04/2022 to 22/05/2022
		Junction between Via XXI Aprile and Via Giovanni Paolo Martini	Installation Performance				22/05/2022
	AW13BO *Anti-monument Temporary but Resistant*	Junction between Via Ferrarese and Via Algardi	Installation Performance	Mono-site	Fixed	Temporary	13/11/2022

Table 9: Case study 04BO: Urban art-works related Urban sites (from Bologna, Italy).

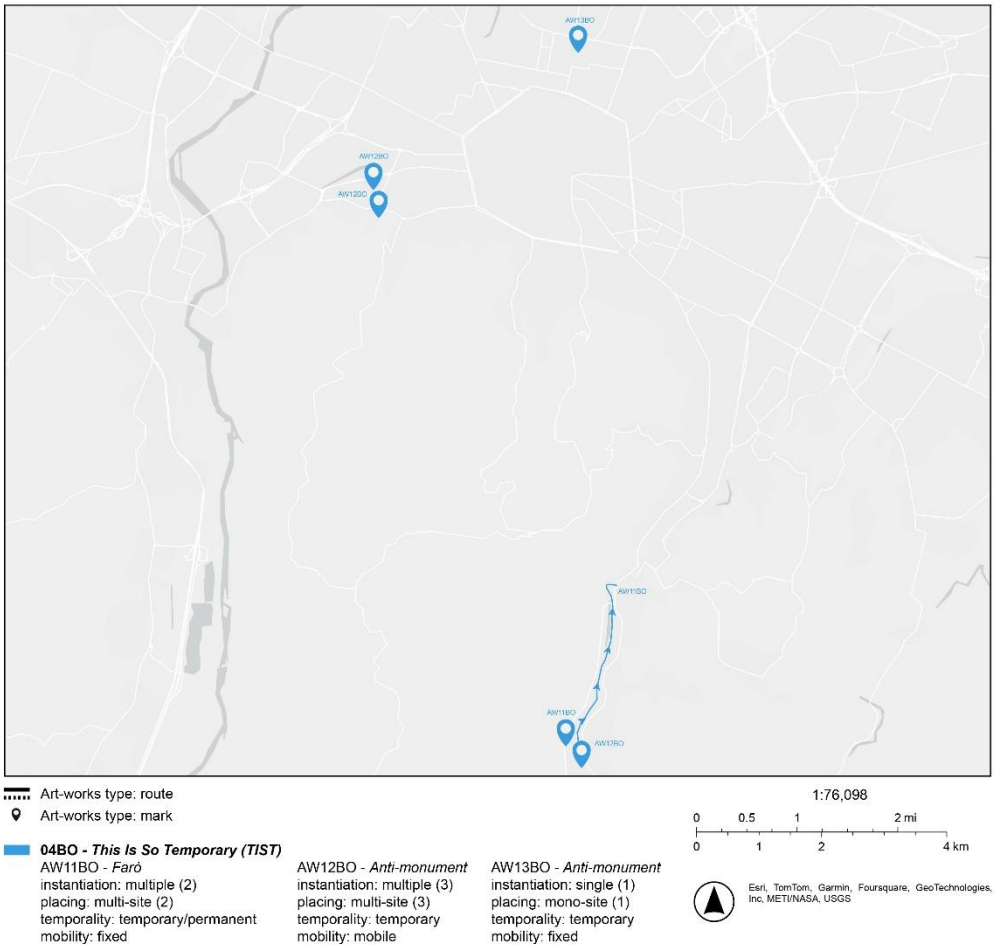


Figure 48: Case study 04BO: map of Urban art-works and related Urban sites; focus at Metropolitan City level (from Bologna, Italy). Illustration: own work.

I met with the artists at their studio in Rastignano, a small town on the outskirts of Bologna. 06BO A rented a former industrial warehouse as a studio in 2016. The warehouse and its surrounding urban and natural spaces played an important role in my interactions with the artists. TIST's concept of studio work differed significantly from 01BO's practice. Production was not limited to the space in Rastignano. UAP members conducted laboratory sessions in the warehouse and performed solitary work in their private residences in the Bolognina area. Most of our meetings took place in these two settings. The laboratory space in Rastignano was often open to the public, serving not only as an exhibition space for the artists, but also as a publicly accessible workspace during daily activities.

One main point of interest was that the collective operated primarily in Bologna, concentrating its activities in the peripheral areas of the city, such as Rastignano, the Pianoro area, the Bolognina area, and the Porto-Saragozza district. It only occasionally interacted with the spaces in the historic center. This aspect was similar to the practice 06BO, but contrasted with the practice 01BO. It is also worth noting that in some cases the practice extended its range of intervention to non-urban areas, as in the case of the art-work AW11BO. The art-work intervened in the

river park of the Savena creek, which flows west of the town of Rastignano and crosses the eastern outskirts of Bologna. Although the UAP sporadically operated through artistic residencies in contexts outside of Bologna, such as Austria or Milan, the comparison with other cities was less relevant, although present in some of the artists' accounts.

A third point of interest in the UAPs was the direction of the practice's artistic work. The art-works were mainly aimed at the urban public space of Bologna, with some sporadic works directed at local independent galleries and artist-run spaces. In addition to this production, the two artists have been engaged in solo work. In the case of 06BO A, for example, the artist often produced non-public sculptures and installations for private commissions using metallic mesh or reclaimed scrap metal. These media were also used by the artists in their collaborative art-works.

A fourth point of interest emerged concerning the themes explored by the practice through its artistic 'research.' The practice demonstrated a clear distinction from those addressed by 01BO, while simultaneously showing strong points of convergence with the work of 06BO. The artists' work was marked by an underlying social, political, and activist dimension, embodied in collective and interactive art-works (often referred to as "projects" by the artists themselves) aimed at encouraging public participation, particularly from "marginalized communities and social groups" that "often do not have direct access to cultural production" (07BO AC). The practice identified this focus as an "artistic and social periphery," which was necessarily, though not exclusively, connected to the city's public space. Another central theme involved monuments, specifically a critique of them, expressed through "reappropriation actions" and the creation of "anti-monuments." A final theme revolved around assembly and games as a "modus operandi of artistic production," presenting an alternative to the methods endorsed by traditional artistic institutions and the art market. This general approach was only minimally adapted to the specific context for which the intervention was designed, highlighting a certain *weak specificity* (Caldarola, 2020, p.105) regarding the urban locations of the art-works.

Regarding the nature of the practice's work, this represented a fifth and final point of interest. The art-works produced by the practice were predominantly temporary and involved a blend of artistic forms, including installations, performances, curatorship, and digital art. A notable characteristic of this practice's work, which emerged as predominant and also shares a strong similarity with the artistic production of UAP 06BO, is that many of the artists' art-works existed in multiple instantiations. This meant that the same art-work was realized or 'took place' at different sites in Bologna and beyond.

In this context, the art-works of the practice functioned as *devices* within a specific strand of the practice's artistic research—such as the 'anti-monuments,' the 'flags,' and so on. These devices were conceived in the artists' laboratory and subsequently *activated* at one or more urban sites, with the possibility of being transferred among different locations. The concept of (public) *use* of the art-work

emerged as central to the practice's work, as demonstrated by the art-work AW12BO – *'Anti-monument - A Living Unit,'* which emphasized the markedly processual nature of these works. The usage processes were typically guided by *rules* (Irvin, 2022) or instructions drafted by the artists, which were considered integral to the art-work itself. The artistic media most commonly employed by the practice during the CP were diverse, encompassing both physical and immaterial elements. The materials included reclaimed items such as plywood boards, welded steel shells from old washing machines, ovens, refrigerators, or computer cases, as well as fabrics made of plastic fibers, concrete, plaster, aerosol paints, acrylic paints, paper, and cardboard. Additionally, the practice utilized digital media, including QR codes, interactive websites, spherical photos, and smartphones.

I began following TIST's work in early December 2022 and continued until December 2023, which marked the final SRI session with the practice. During this period, the artists were actively involved in the CPs of most of the art-works later discussed in both the semi-structured interview and the SRI session. My first encounter with the artists coincided with the recent completion of the art-work AW13BO – *'Anti-monument-Temporary but Resistant'* (Figures 59 and 60) in the Bolognina area, which was later analyzed in both the interview and the SRI. Additionally, the artists were working on the first instantiation of the art-work AW11BO – *'Farò'* (Figures 50, 51, 53, and 54), an art-work that would eventually exist in three different instantiations (although only two are analyzed here as case studies) during the period of my fieldwork. While I was able to follow the CPs of these two art-works, the art-work AW12BO *'Anti-monument-A Living Unit'* (Figures 56 and 57) had already been created and had 'taken place' in three different instantiations, relying on the same device: respectively on December 31st, 2021; from April 29th to May 22nd, 2022; and finally on May 22nd, 2022. The CP of this art-work was primarily reconstructed through the interview and visual material.



Figure 49: The artists' studio, the industrial warehouse in Rastignano. January 2024. Photo: own work (RGI).

Given the ‘open’ use the artists made of the industrial warehouse in Rastignano, several art-works produced by the practice were connected to that specific site. Both instantiations of the art-work AW11BO – *‘Farò,’* as well as one instantiation of the art-work AW12BO – *‘Anti-monument-A Living Unit,’* used the warehouse and the surrounding spaces. To date, the art-work AW11BO has existed in multiple instantiations – specifically three: two in the winters of 2023 and 2024, which are analyzed here, and one in the spring of 2023, which was not analyzed.

4.3.1 AW11BO – *Farò*

Snapshot: AW11BO – ‘Farò’ (instantiation 2023)

The first instantiation of the art-work AW11BO – *‘Farò’* (which translates to “I will do it”) occurred on January 28, 2023, with a second instantiation on January 28, 2024. This art-work was a “dispersed festival” organized by the artists as part of ArtCity, an annual cultural event throughout Bologna that involves both local cultural institutions and independent artists and groups. The central theme of *‘Farò’* explored “the interconnection between artistic and social practices, political activism, and aesthetic theory,” and this theme was manifested in various forms across the different instantiations. The first instantiation, referred to by the artists as an “edition,” was designed to illustrate this theme using the artists’ space in Rastignano. The warehouse at this location was utilized for both indoor and outdoor activities. Inside, works in progress by various collective members were exhibited. Outside, in the garden adjacent to one side of the warehouse, the artists created a ‘permanent’ interactive installation featuring a scalable column named “*il faro*” (the lighthouse). This structure was made from old washing machine shells welded together and painted white, and it was secured to the ground with reinforced concrete foundations.



Figure 50: First instantiation of the art-work AW11BO '*Farò*' and its site, the warehouse. January 2024. Photo: own work (RGI).



Figure 51: First instantiation of the art-work AW11BO '*Farò*' and its site, the warehouse. January 2023. Source: the artists (PGI).

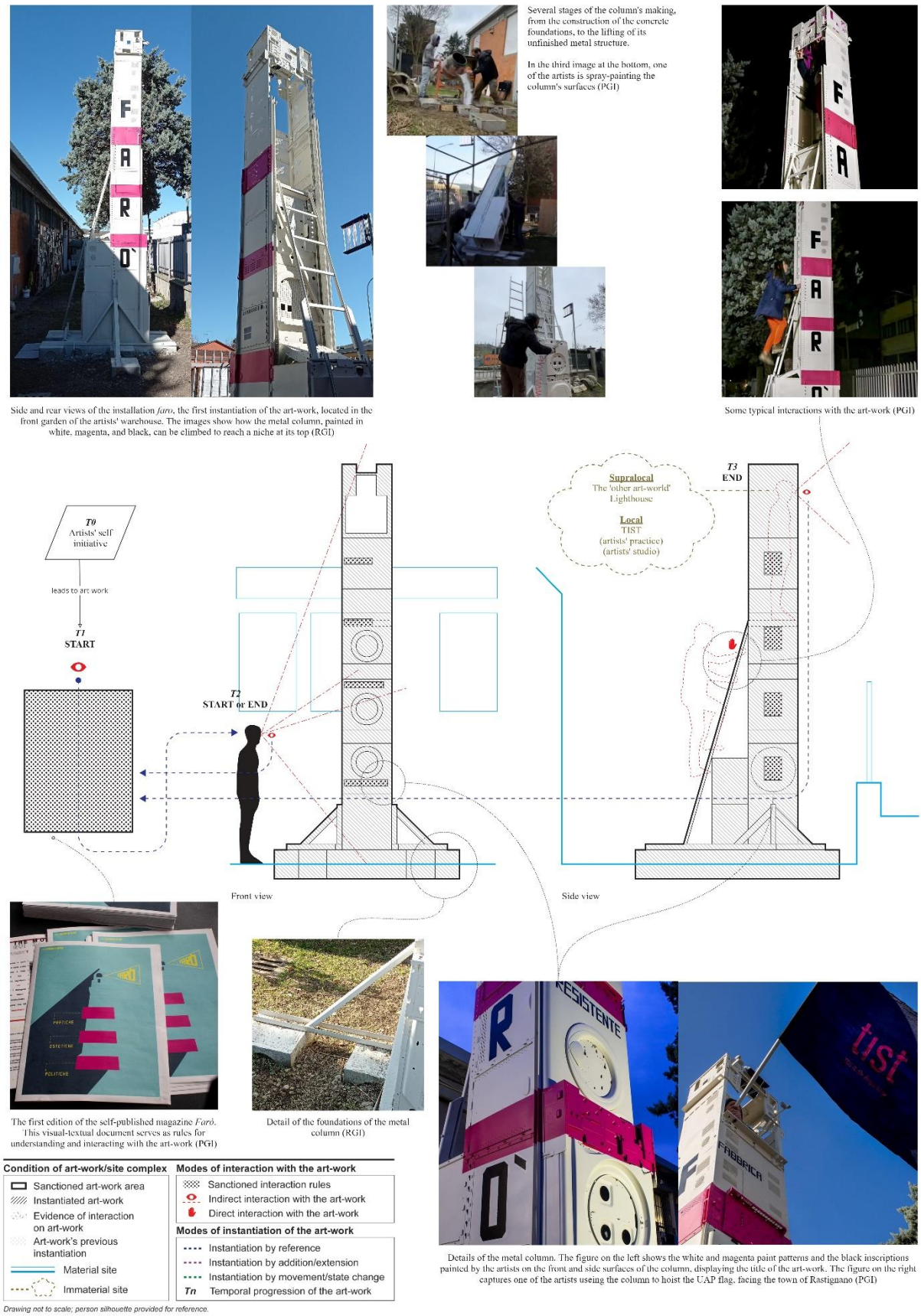


Figure 52: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the first instantiation (2023) art-work AW11BO *'Farò'* rendered via a process flow diagram. (High definition diagram in Appendix C).

The art-work AW11BO – *'Farò'* began (T0) with its first instantiation in January 2023 as a self-initiated piece by the artists. However, the process leading to the ideation of this art-work is somewhat unclear, as the artists provided confused and often conflicting accounts regarding its origin. On one hand, they stated that they couldn't recall exactly what sparked the idea:

> "Honestly, I don't even remember when the idea was born… […] Maybe it started with the idea of… doing something, initially… or not? From the idea of doing [*fare*]… Like, of creating this festival series, right?" (07BO AC).

On the other hand, during one of our more recent conversations, 06BO A mentioned that an element which later became part of the art-work already existed before the founding of the UAP. This was during a period when he and another artist friend were considering creating an installation that would serve as a material landmark for their artistic practice at the time, to be placed in Rastignano, near the warehouse they had recently rented.

> "With [L, anonymized identity], who was a sculptor... Because L and I got the studio in 2015… and we wanted to build the tower… Like every Bolognese family has their own tower. So even Studio Becero, as he called it… wanted its own Bolognese tower! And there's always… there's always been that idea..." (06BO A).

Despite the discrepancies in the history of the work and the resulting difficulty in reconstructing a coherent ideation process, the mentioned element did indeed become part of the 2023 instantiation of the art-work. It took the form of a tall column with a square base, constructed almost entirely from scrap metal materials, particularly old washing machine casings, which were welded together and painted in alternating bands of white and magenta.

It is therefore plausible to assume that this element initially merged, in its essential form and not yet detailed in terms of material realization, into the collective ideation of the other fundamental component of the art-work, namely a self-published magazine by UAP, printed in A3 format and titled *'Farò.'* These two elements constitute the first complete instantiation of the art-work *'Farò,'* which was sanctioned as a device in the form of a "dispersed festival" (07BO AC) with the same title, further enriched by the subtitle *'Pratiche Estetiche Politiche'* (Aesthetic Political Practices). During one of our early meetings, while the work was still in progress, the artists explained to me:

> "[*Farò*] will unite everyone here in the studio, plus other people. There will be nine, ten artistic things... There's no curatorship. So, everyone self-manages… there's no censorship. Everyone can do what they want. The idea behind it is to bring the language of aesthetics closer to that of politics. But there's no obligation for the artists to speak about politics through their

> work. You can talk about anything. […] It's called *'Farò,'* because the issue of doing is important to us, especially doing collectively. […] Doing is important because it's not enough just to talk about ideas. You have to try to actualize them, to try to put them into practice." (07BO AC)

It is important to note here that the ideation of the art-work "dispersed festival" in its two essential elements, 'column' and 'self-published magazine,' resulted in a complete instantiation of the work. This is sanctioned by the artists, who stated that interaction with the art-work and its elements, whether direct (e.g., its scalability) or indirect, is not a necessary requirement for its full existence as a piece, but rather a possibility:

> "It's not so much about climbing… It doesn't matter if you climb it… […] because it was more a matter of… installation ego, perhaps… […] And I mean… usually you climb a lighthouse; so, it was right to be able to climb it! I mean at that point… Otherwise, it's just an obelisk!" (06BO A).

However, there is a noticeable leaning toward indirect interaction, as the art-work possesses a strong visual and communicative character, emphasizing its aspect of visibility. This is made evident, for instance, by the letters and words painted in black by the artists on the white surfaces of the column. These include the characters that form the name of the art-work, 'F A R O',' painted on the left side of the column, which is an acronym for the phrase

'Fabbrica / dell'Arte / Resistente / Organizzata'[40]

painted word by word on the front side of the metal structure.

Furthermore, the visibility aspect of the art-work is made explicit by two factors: on one hand, the possibility of 'seeing the work from afar' as a landmark, enhanced by the use of flags or light bulbs installed at its top; on the other hand, the possibility of 'seeing far' by climbing the column. However, the artists have repeatedly emphasized that these interactions are merely possible and not mandatory for the complete instantiation to occur. For this reason, a 'low' level of instantiation by reference emerges for this instantiation of the art-work. This mode of instantiation by reference becomes prominent in the second instantiation of AW11BO, as I will demonstrate later.

Consequently, the artists have sanctioned 'weak' rules for this instantiation of the art-work, which, on one hand, correspond to the self-published magazine that serves as a conceptual guide – in this case, visual-textual – primarily for understanding the "dispersed festival" and the public's participation in it, rather than for direct interaction with the steel column. The magazine cover features a symbolic illustration of the column installation, reinterpreted as a lighthouse. In this sense, these rules continually draw the attention of those experiencing the work

[40] Factory of Organized Resistant Art.

back to the self-published magazine, beginning with the letters and words painted in black by the artists on the white and magenta surface of the column. These inscriptions should also be considered as 'weak' rules of the art-work.

The site of this instantiation of the art-work has a dual nature. In its immaterial aspect, the site is generic. On a supralocal level, the concepts evoked are those of a 'lighthouse' and the critical idea of 'another world of contemporary art,' which contrasts with the traditional settings of private galleries, museums, and collecting. Instead, it is centered on collective artistic work and engagement with local communities. However, on a local level, there is no reference to the specific context in which the art-work is situated—whether in Rastignano or the city of Bologna. The reference is instead exclusively to TIST and its identity as a 'collective and political artistic practice working in urban space,' as well as more directly to the UAP studio itself:

> "The lighthouse was created to indicate more where we are… It's not really, like… a ladder you climb… It's more like the lighthouse that in the dark shows you the exact port… that's its function..." (07BO AC).

Regarding its material counterpart, the artists decided to anchor the metal column to the ground of the courtyard in front of their studio in Rastignano using reinforced concrete foundation plinths, to which the steel structure is attached, thereby integrating the art-work with this specific and tangible urban site. The column was constructed by 06BO A a few months before the festival began, on January 28, 2023:

> "I built it horizontally… The top part, well… I built that vertically though… Then everything was put together… and it was raised, we lifted it off the ground. Then I painted it..." (06BO A).

Snapshot: AW11BO – 'Farò' (instantiation 2024)

The second instantiation of the art-work AW11BO (Figure 15), which took place in January 2024, was presented as a digital device. This device, developed collaboratively with two other cultural associations and activist groups in Rastignano, manifested as an experiential itinerary or guided walking performance. The route began at the artists' warehouse and meandered through the urban and anthropized natural landscape of the Savena creek, connecting the three cultural associations along the way. During my observation on January 29, 2024, remnants of the floods that had affected the region between May and June 2023 were still visible along the path. QR codes on small physical blocks, made from magenta-painted steel and cement, marked these traces and the locations of the three associations. Scanning these QR codes with a smartphone provided access to spherical photos depicting an imaginative reconstruction of the "future of the valley." This reconstruction referenced not only the flood events but also the anticipated impacts—according to the artists—of the construction of a new

highway, the *Fondovalle Savena* road, commonly known as *'il Nodo'* (the node) by locals. The details of this instantiation of the art-work emerged spontaneously during one of the SRIs with the UAP. During this session, they introduced a recent project they had just started, which I followed from that point onward.



Figure 53: Second instantiation of the art-work AW11BO '*Farò*' and its site, the Savena creek and Rastignano – in their both physical and digital forms. December 2023. Source: the artists (PGI).

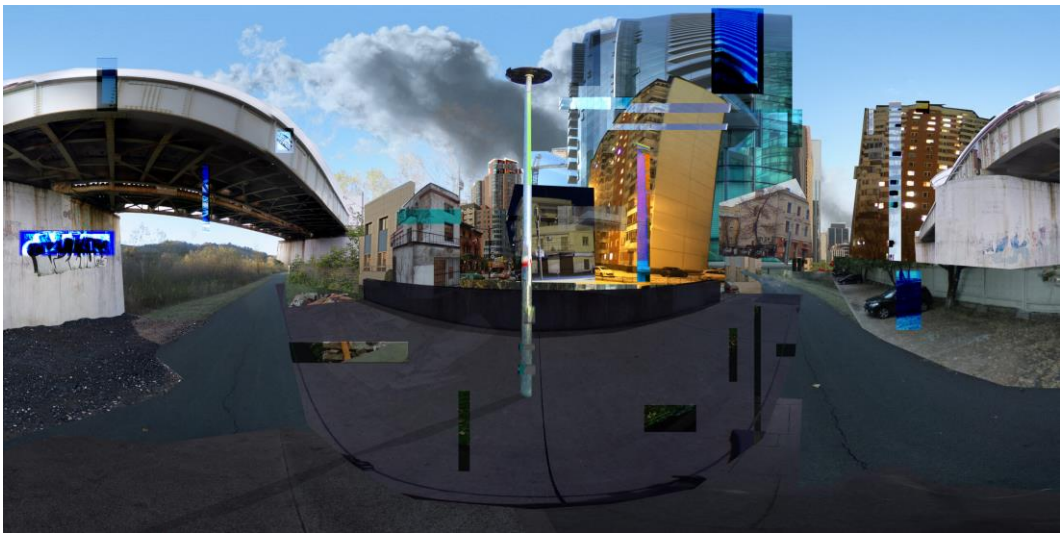


Figure 54: Second instantiation of the art-work AW11BO '*Farò*' and its site, the Savena creek and Rastignano – in their digital form: one of the spherical photos showcasing the dystopic landscape imagined by the artists. January 2024. Source: the artists (PGI).



Figure 55: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the second instantiation (2024) of the art-work AW01BO *'Farò'* rendered via a process flow diagram. (High definition diagram in Appendix D).

The second instantiation of the art-work AW11BO – 'Farò' also began (T0) as a self-initiated piece by the artists in January 2024. This instantiation is closely tied to the previous one. First, it was conceived by the artists as a device in the form of a "dispersed festival." Additionally, the ideation of this "edition" of the art-work led to the creation of a new self-published magazine, also titled *'Farò'* and subtitled *'Pratiche Estetiche Politiche'* (Aesthetic Political Practices) produced in A3 print format.

This instantiation of AW11BO consists of multiple inseparable elements. However, in this case, the artists supplemented the 'self-published magazine' element with two others: a physical-digital installation, initially defined as "diminished reality" (07BO AC) and later redefined as "refresh reality." The technology used in this component of the art-work's instantiation was indeed augmented reality. This element, which I will refer to as a 'digital device,' consists of a series of spherical photos (or panoramas) viewable through a smartphone screen. These photos were created by the artists using Photoshop and collage techniques, based on photographs of the urban and natural environment of Rastignano mixed with cut-outs of pictures found online.

This digital device is closely linked to a 'path,' a route to be walked, either individually or in a group, and is divided into two components. The first component is an online 'digital map,' created by the artists using the Google MyMaps platform, which outlines the geographical route of the itinerary. This route covers a stretch of about four kilometers along the Savena stream, passing through Rastignano.

The second component consists of five physical objects, or 'blocks,' carefully placed by the artists along the path, corresponding to five mandatory stops identified on the digital map. Three of these five blocks are shaped like truncated square-based prisms, made of concrete and painted with magenta paint. The other two blocks were constructed from folded and cut sheet metal to form shorter truncated square-based prisms, also painted in magenta. On one surface of each of these five objects, the artists affixed a QR code, unique to each block.

Reconstructing the ideation of this instantiation of the work was challenging, as the artists were unable to precisely outline the history of its development over time. However, unlike the first "edition" of the art-work, the artists indicated that the generating idea for this instantiation emerged within their UAP. This idea evolved from the attitude and operational methods implemented during the production of the previous instantiation, this time incorporating numerous site visits to the specific material site of the art-work. These visits were crucial for assessing the condition of the selected stretch of the Savena creek for the path and its stopping points, while also gaining a better understanding of the sudden changes affecting the entire area following recent floods and long-term infrastructure developments related to the new highway, the *Fondovalle Savena*. The artists elaborated on the idea behind this "edition" of the work while it was still in progress:

> "It will be structured as a collective walk through the territory. Because here… Where it's marked in red… They're building a very large road junction, which will completely change both the landscape and social life, mobility, everything! […] And then the flood came, and of course, the banks didn't hold. They cut down the trees last April-May to build, and in May the flood came… the Savena overflowed and washed away the entire construction site… it destroyed the bike path behind our warehouse, which was a pedestrian walkway for people who took walks… […] Mobility is interrupted… they haven't restored anything." (07BO AC)

They further explained the broader implications: "The point is that by building that infrastructure… that valley will be quickly accessible from the ring road… and so imagine all the industrialization, the new warehouses… there's a lot of developable land in that valley… so they'll build a lot… it's an investment, clearly stated…" (06BO A) The purpose of this collective walk, according to the artists, is to raise awareness about the ongoing situation. Along this path, there will be five designated points where they are working digitally, transforming the landscape into a speculative version of what it might become if current trends continue:

> "We're transforming the landscape digitally into a speculative landscape… what it will be like when there are no more trees. But it's a speculative landscape. On one hand, it reflects on what will happen if all the trees are removed to build the infrastructure… there will be drought, soil erosion, in short… total consumption. But beyond reflection, we've hypothesized scenarios. […] We didn't want to create a photorealistic, precise landscape of what it might be if… but to speculate on the future landscape of the territory […] because they're building many houses, many roads, the green space is decreasing, the land is becoming drier and drier... […] All the landscapes we propose will be different… there will be deserts, large parking lots, houses… or maybe the opposite, everything full of water because the sea level rises and there's nothing left. […] And so, the people walking begin to see everything collapsed, then they have to walk among cars because the park is inaccessible… So, in the meantime, on a physical level, you already see a territory and can imagine what it will be like later… Plus, we're offering you an even more speculative show, to make you think…" (07BO AC)

Once the idea was defined, the artists proposed a collaboration with two other entities operating in Rastignano, two cultural associations that, like them, were based along the Savena creek. This collaboration, on the one hand, confirmed many of the ideas outlined by the artists up to that point. On the other hand, it redefined the 'path' element in relation to the presence of the three cultural entities in the local area, aligning three of the five mandatory stops with these entities.

In contrast to the previous instantiation, this instantiation of the art-work is considered, after the ideation of its three essential elements ('magazine,' 'digital device,' and 'path') and their internal components (the 'digital map' and the

‘concrete and steel blocks with QR codes’), as a partial rather than a complete instantiation. The artists have established that interaction, both direct and indirect, with the art-work and its elements is mandatory and necessary to fully complete the work.

In collaboration with the other two local cultural associations, the artists established the relationships between the various components of the art-work and developed a set of rules to direct public interaction. In this particular instantiation, the self-published magazine once again serves as a conceptual guide for understanding the “dispersed festival” and facilitating public participation, functioning as a ‘weak’ rule. Additionally, a symbolic representation of the digital map appears on the cover of the magazine, creating a link between the 'path' element and the 'magazine' element.

Concerning the ‘digital device,’ the artists determined that it activates when a person positions themselves at the start of the path. This starting point is the first mandatory stop, situated at the midpoint of a bridge near the UAP warehouse, aligning with the course of the Savena creek. From there, the individual accesses the digital map on their smartphone, using a web address provided in the magazine or by the artists, to check the locations of the various mandatory stops along the path. It was then sanctioned that, upon reaching this point, the participant scans the first QR code on their smartphone, which is located on the magenta-colored ‘block.’ In this instance, the block is made of metal and is attached to a roadside guardrail with wire. In cases where the blocks are made of concrete, they are embedded in the ground. The ‘map>QR code’ complex thereby represents an interaction rule within the art-work.

Once scanned, the QR code provides a web address through which the participant can access the first ‘spherical photo,’ which opens in fullscreen mode on their smartphone display. In this context, the ‘QR code>spherical photo’ complex constitutes another interaction rule within the art-work. The artists have specified that, upon arriving at this point, the participant should observe the unfolding of the spherical photo ‘around them’ for an indefinite period – determined autonomously by the participant. This process creates an indirect interaction reference, whereby the speculative digital landscape created by the artists is linked to the real, material site integrated into the art-work. In this regard, unlike the first instantiation of AW11BO, the piece here is fully instantiated through a ‘heavy’ mode of instantiation by reference.

Moreover, the area of the art-work, as sanctioned by the artists, continuously evolves as the participant engages with it. Initially, this area corresponds to the self-published magazine in its A3 print format. It then extends to include the digital map, followed by an expansion to encompass the concrete and metal blocks. Finally, the area further broadens to incorporate the participant's smartphone as they view the spherical photo, thereby integrating the smartphone itself into the art-work’s media profile. This progression serves as the material evidence of interaction with the art-work and, as a result, its complete instantiation.

Finally, the artists have sanctioned that this sequence of direct and indirect interaction actions should be repeated at all five mandatory stops. The participant is to continue autonomously along the itinerary, moving from one block to the next, from one spherical photo to another, until reaching the final stop of the path, located at Parco del Paleotto, north of Rastignano. The art-work was enacted according to these modes on January 28, 2024.

4.3.2 AW12BO and AW13BO – The *Anti-monuments*: *A Living Unit* and *Temporary but Resistant*

Snapshot: AW12BO – 'Anti-monument - A Living Unit' (instantiation 2021-22)

The art-work AW12BO – *'Anti-monument-A Living Unit'* featured three distinct instantiations. The first took place on December 31, 2021, in the parking lot adjacent to the artists' warehouse in Rastignano. The second and third instantiations occurred from April 29, 2022, to May 22, 2022, and on May 22, 2022, respectively (Figure 57), both in the Porto-Saragozza neighborhood as part of a collaboration with a local UAP. The art-work consisted of a mobile and interactive installation-device resembling a classical-style pedestal, similar to those used for busts or equestrian statues commemorating historical figures. It was constructed with an internal welded steel structure, covered with wooden panels and moldings, and painted white. The device featured hinged doors that allowed it to be transported on wheels to various sites. When opened, these doors revealed niches and usable spaces inside, designed to evoke key functional areas of a house (hence the title *'A Living Unit'*). These areas included a kitchen (with a stove, table, and chairs), a living room (with an armchair), and a bedroom (with a folding bed), among others. The device had two distinct states: 'deactivated/static'—for instance, when stored inside the artists' warehouse in Rastignano (Figure 56)—and 'activated/mobile,' as seen in the first and third instantiations. In its 'deactivated/static' state, the device was transported by the artists to the activation site, where it was then opened and utilized by the participating public. Interaction with the device was guided by "rules of use," such as where to sit or which door to open to access the stove, represented directly on the installation in the form of bas-reliefs.



Figure 56: The art-work AW12BO '*Anti-monument – A Living Unit'* in its deactivate/static state, kept at the practice' studio in Rastignano. December 2022. Photo: own work (RGI).



Figure 57: Instantiation 2022 of the art-work AW12BO '*Anti-monument – A Living Unit*' and its site, the junction between Via XXI Aprile and Via Giovanni Paolo Martini. May 2022. Source: the artists (PGI).

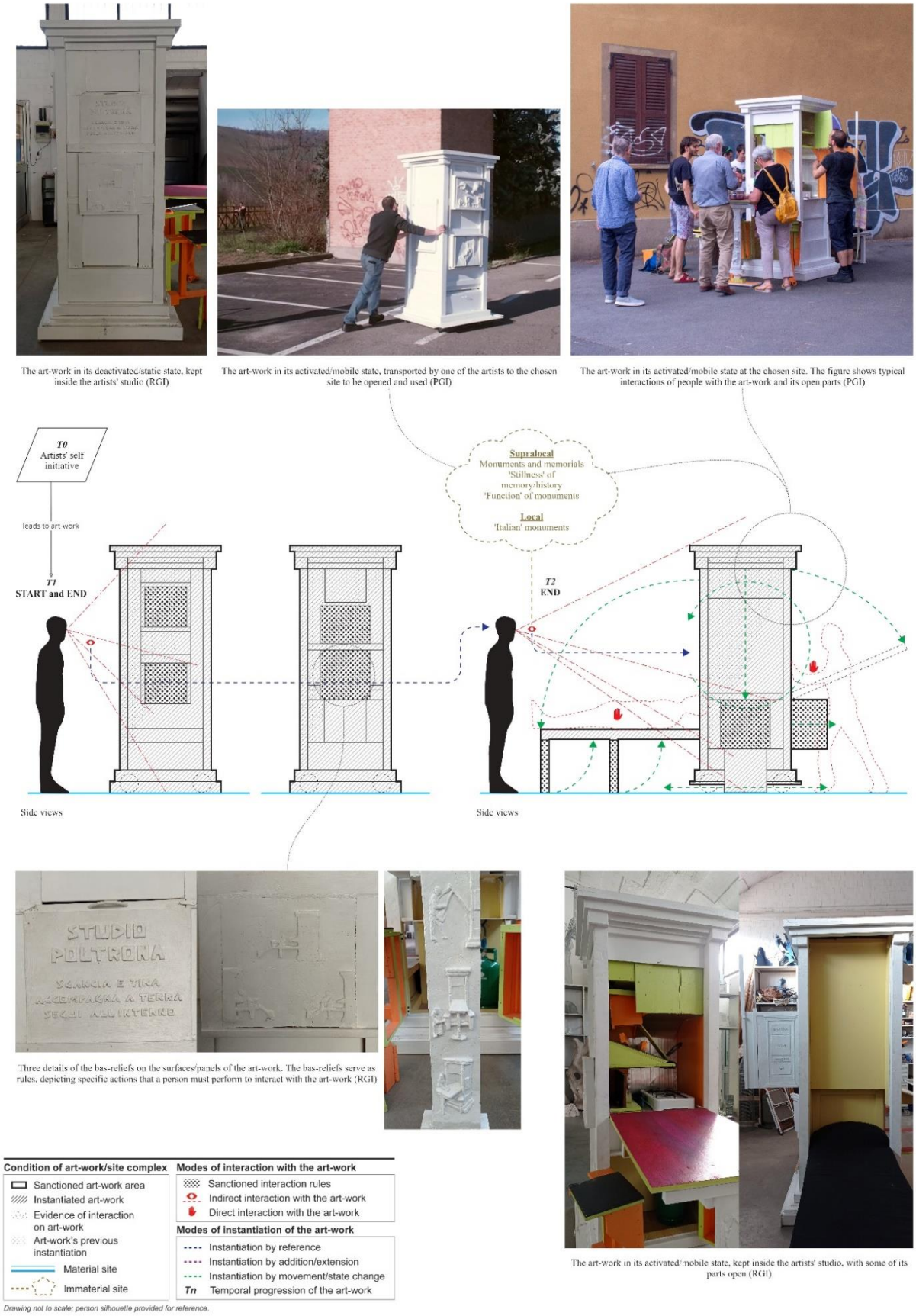


Figure 58: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the instantiation 2021-22 of the art-work AW12BO *'Anti-monument – A Living Unit'* rendered via a process flow diagram. (High definition diagram in Appendix E).

The art-work AW12BO – *'Anti-monument – A Living Unit'* originated (T0) as a self-initiated piece by the artists. During our discussions, the artists were able to reconstruct a relatively detailed history of the work's conceptualization. In summary, this development unfolded in two key moments, both temporal and contextual. The first moment predates the founding of UAP and occurs in a context outside the city of Bologna, specifically in Florence, Italy. The second moment follows the meeting of the two artists and marks the beginning of their collaborative practice as an artistic duo. This phase sees the art-work re-specified within this new context, not in relation to the city of Bologna, but within a more generic context, thereby disconnecting it from its origins in Florence.

The first key moment in the art-work's ideation dates back to 2016, during the period when one of the UAP artists, 06BO A, was studying sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence. The artist described this moment as follows:

> "The *Anti-monument*, which is a flagship of the collective, was something I created several years ago when I lived in Florence… a city clearly dedicated to everything but the people who live there... It appears to be a classic monument, but as you approach it, you discover it hides a function. It invites you to open it, and inside there are various elements that could be chairs or a kitchen... Essentially, what I made was a living unit, which also includes a bed. Having a bed in a public square is symbolically powerful. In a society where housing is still not a right, it might be occupied by a homeless person. But perhaps it could push a city like Florence toward a different kind of tourism—one for people who live on the streets, who don't stay in hotels... But that's why, symbolically, a bed in the square is significant... The *Anti-monument* itself doesn't celebrate anything... Usually, monuments commemorate an imperial past, a battle, a commander, right? We're accustomed to seeing statues of Garibaldi in every square, for instance. But this one only celebrates the moment when it's inhabited and lived in. To achieve that, though, there has to be a union of people participating." (06BO A)

The artist mentioned producing numerous "prototypes" of the Anti-monument, which are various versions of the art-work that significantly differ – both in form and materials used – from the one he autonomously and materially realized in 2016, named *'A Living Unit.'* This version consists of a pedestal with a square base, designed in a classic 18th-century style. It stands two meters high and one meter wide, is movable thanks to wheels installed at its base, and features an internal steel structure. The pedestal includes a system of internal niches and external wooden cladding made from reclaimed panels, treated and painted white with washable paint, and openable by hinges.

I was unable to determine the exact number of these prototypes, but based on a visual-textual document – a poster created by the artists to accompany one of the art-work's instantiations – I counted a total of eight versions. As of the time of writing this text (summer 2024), the prototypes exist in various forms, both material

and immaterial: some as concepts, others as drawings or 3D models in digital format, created with SketchUp software. Only one prototype was partially realized in its internal steel structure and is currently kept in the artists' studio within the warehouse in Rastignano. Additionally, the artist initially created a plaster statue of himself, which was installed on top of the pedestal. This statue was present exclusively during the first phase of the art-work's ideation.

The second key moment in the art-work's ideation is marked by its integration into the oeuvre of the UAP, during a period when it was still configured as a duo rather than a collective. Notably, this was the first art-work created by the artists under the name TIST. In an article not yet published at the time of writing this text, the artists describe this moment:

> "In 2021, after the lockdown was eased, TIST's members employed *'A Living Unit'* to address a new emergency: the fear of physicality and the long-lasting consequences this fear produced on the social relationships between people in the urban context. [...] The artists focused on the further function of the device: to catalyze social encounters in the public space."

This moment coincides with the characterization of the work as an artistic device, a re-specification that emphasized the functional, mobile, interactive, and public aspects of the art-work, which were already present at its inception. In other words, the work was re-envisioned as a 'monument' understood as a 'public and everyday use object.' From a material standpoint, no modifications were made to the originally conceived art-work, except for the removal of the plaster statue, as the art-work was re-specified to align with the sole identity of the UAP, becoming its "flagship" (06BO A). This marked the work as a foundational theme of the practice's artistic research: 'anti-monumentality.' The artists have sanctioned that this aspect of their artistic research also includes the art-work AW13BO – *'Anti-monument-Temporary but Resistant,'* which I will address later.

Time T0 is, therefore, a decisive moment for the art-work, composed inextricably of the two key moments described above. Through this dual ideation process, the artists sanctioned both the area of the art-work, encompassing the pedestal and its three-dimensional footprint in its 'completely closed' and 'partially or fully open' states, and the salient properties of the work, particularly its function and mobility. These properties, in turn, necessitate direct interaction by the public with the components of the art-work.

To guide this direct interaction, the artists sanctioned "rules of use" (06BO A) for the art-work. As described by the artists:

> "These *Anti-monuments* must somehow almost force people to collaborate, to do something together, right? [...] Because they have functions... according to which you have to do something with someone else..." (07BO AC) "Almost like orders..." (06BO A) "Yes, obligations... otherwise you just look at it. If you want to interact, you have to do things. I mean, what we want is to push people to act..." (07BO AC).

These rules were implemented from the beginning of the ideation process in the form of plaster bas-reliefs installed on the four sides of the pedestal, corresponding to each openable or otherwise movable panel. The bas-reliefs illustrate, both through images and text (with raised letters), the specific actions or series of actions that a person must physically perform to interact with the art-work and its various components. For instance, one panel might depict the outline of a person, shown in profile, lowering a wooden panel or sitting or lying on it. Another panel includes the text:

> "STUDIO ARMCHAIR. UNHOOK AND PULL. LOWER TO THE GROUND. FOLLOW INSIDE."[41]

By sanctioning these rules, the artists defined two fundamental states of the art-work, corresponding to its previously delineated area: a 'deactivated/static' state, which correlates to the art-work in its 'completely closed' state, and an 'activated/mobile' state, which aligns with the art-work in its 'partially or fully open' state.

The artists also sanctioned that interaction with the art-work is not necessarily tied to a specific immaterial site, such as the city of Bologna:

> "It doesn't have a predetermined site..." (07BO AC) "And it shouldn't have one either!" (06BO A).

In fact, while the material site is arbitrarily chosen by the artists each time and physically reached by moving the art-work on wheels, its intangible counterpart can, at most, be associated on a local level with the generic concept of an 'Italian monument.'

My analysis suggests that the two key moments at time T0 did not necessarily produce two complete instantiations of the art-work, but rather two partial instantiations. In these partial instantiations, the art-work exists both as the concept of the 'Anti-monument living unit' and as the physical pedestal in its 'deactivated/static' state. This is because the art-work's full instantiation as a device necessarily involves a process of use, which occurs in a material site arbitrarily chosen by the artists. In other words, the art-work reaches full instantiation only when it is actually used and activated within the context of a specific material site, which is not predetermined but selected each time. Until that moment, the art-work remains in a potential state, existing as both an idea and a physical object, but not yet as a fully instantiated artistic device.

Examples of complete instantiation of the art-work include the two occasions when the artists transported the pedestal outside their studio in Rastignano: on December 31, 2021, in the parking lot of Via Serrabella near the warehouse, and on May 22, 2022, at the intersection of Via XXI Aprile and Via

[41] The original text in Italian reads: "STUDIO POLTRONA. SGANCIA E TIRA. ACCOMPAGNA A TERRA. SEGUI ALL'INTERNO". Own translation.

Giovanni Paolo Martini in the Bolognina area. In both instances, once the predetermined site was reached, the art-work was initially partially opened by the artists, particularly by 06BO A, and subsequently by the people present at the site or those informed of the event by the artists themselves. The initial opening of the work by the artists appears to have been necessary to familiarize the public with the art-work's functioning and to introduce them to its rules of use. This moment marked a state change of the work, transitioning from its 'deactivated/static' state to its 'activated/mobile' state.

Once in the 'partially or fully open' state, the participants, along with the artists, began to engage with the art-work in its various functions, now made visible: lying on the bed, sitting at the dining table, preparing coffee in one of the internal niches of the pedestal where a small functioning camping stove was present, and so on. At the end of the complete instantiation of the art-work, the artists closed all parts of the pedestal and returned it to the studio, thereby restoring it to its 'deactivated/static' state and, consequently, to a partial instantiation.

Another example of partial instantiation occurred between April 29, 2022, and May 22, 2022, when the artists moved the pedestal into the gallery space of another UAP in Bologna, located on Via Eugenio Curiel in the Porto-Saragozza area. In this case, the work was merely displayed in its 'partially or fully open' state, but without allowing direct interaction, public use, or its complete instantiation.

Snapshot: AW13BO – 'Anti-monument – Temporary but Resistant' (instantiation 2022)

Unlike the other two art-works analyzed here, AW13BO – *'Anti-monument-Temporary but Resistant'* was presented in a single instantiation on November 13, 2022. This event was held at the junction of Via Ferrarese and Via Algardi in Bolognina and was part of the *Oltre il Ponte – Festa di Strada Partigiana*, an annual street festival commemorating the start of the *Battle of Bolognina* on November 15, 1944. The project consisted of two main components: one hundred white-painted cardboard boxes, shaped like parallelepipeds, which the artists referred to as "anti-fascist bricks." Some of these boxes featured excerpts from Bertolt Brecht's 1951 poem *In Praise of Dialectics*. The second component was an A4-sized paper sheet, created by the UAP artists, which included a comic strip depicting the art-work in its 'finished' state, its integration into a fictional context, and instructions for interacting with the boxes (Figure 60). During the festival, the artists placed the one hundred boxes at the site and invited attendees to write their "political thoughts" on the surfaces of the "anti-fascist bricks" using markers provided by the artists. As the boxes were gradually covered with writing, the artists assembled them into a single structure resembling a wall (Figure 59), using stucco to bind the pieces together.



Figure 59: Art-work AW13BO '*Anti-monument – Temporary but Resistant*' and its site, the junction between Via Ferrarese and Via Algardi. November 2022. Source: the artists (PGI).



Figure 60: Part of the art-work AW13BO *'Anti-monument – Temporary but Resistant'* included a rules sheet created by the artists, which was handed to the participating public to guide their interaction with the art-work. This sheet provided instructions on how to engage with the "anti-fascist bricks" and contribute to the collective construction of the final structure. November 2022. Source: the artists (PGI).

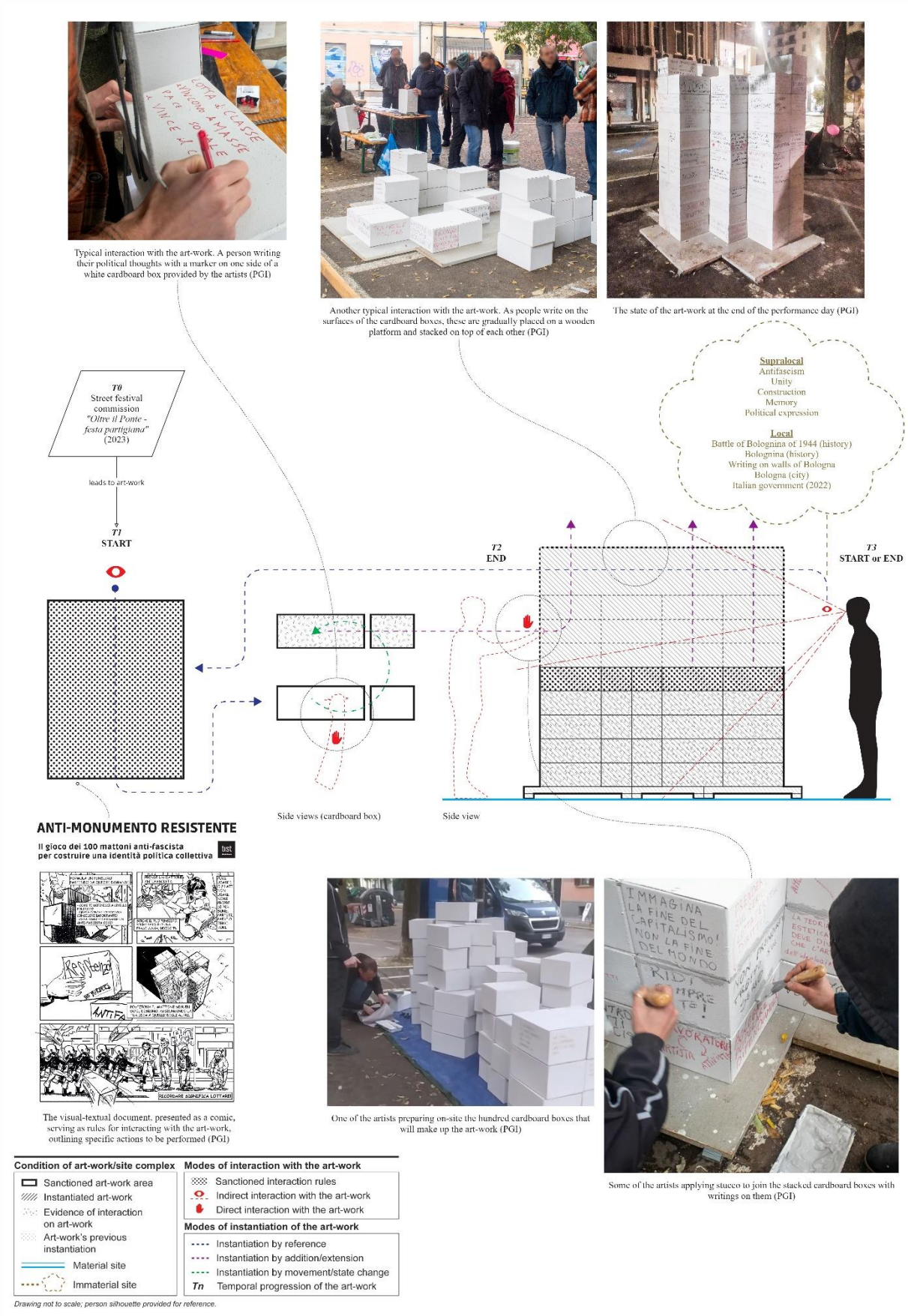


Figure 61: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the art-work AW13BO *'Anti-monument – Temporary but Resistant'* rendered via a process flow diagram. (High definition diagram in Appendix F).

The art-work AW13BO – *'Anti-monument – Temporary but Resistant'* began (T0) with its first and only instantiation on November 13, 2022. The work was created in response to a commission from the organizers of a street festival titled *Oltre il Ponte – Festa di Strada Partigiana,* promoted by a cultural association in Bologna. This festival, held annually in the Bolognina area, is a popular celebration of the so-called *Battle of Bolognina*, a historic event that took place on November 15, 1944, during which a confrontation lasting just over an hour occurred between the partisans of the seventh GAP[42] brigade and the Nazi-fascist occupying forces, leading to the decimation of many brigade members.

Regarding the initial input, external to the UAP, the artists explained that from the outset, their intention with this art-work was to create a connection between the commemoration of the Battle of Bolognina and the current Italian political landscape (2022-2024). They stated:

> "Where did it come from? Because the March on Rome happened... I don't know if you remember… A year ago, it happened… right after Giorgia Meloni came to power… They actually organized a March on Rome… And so, it also started from an annoyance… And in the meantime, there was this festival in Bolognina dedicated to the resistance of Bolognina, but also against the March on Rome of the new fascism… so we said… [...] So we made, indeed, a hundred bricks for the centenary… but it was the centenary of the March on Rome… That's why they marched…!" (07BO AC)

This testimony also highlighted a recurring attitude in the ideation of UAP art-works: a sense of urgency to react—either by responding or imagining a solution—to a situation of change perceived as problematic or "annoying."[43] The artists explained:

> "Everything starts like this… a bit out of necessity… from annoyance, fundamentally. From something you don't like, something unresolved, something that doesn't work… And then you think about the form of this thing… but also about the functionality of something that could help solve this problem… Or at least make it visible… because many problems exist but aren't evident. So maybe it doesn't solve it, but it makes it evident…" (07BO AC)

The artists quickly decided that this art-work would be part of their ongoing 'anti-monumental' artistic research, which began with the art-work AW12BO. As one of the artists explained:

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[42] The GAP *(Gruppi di Azione Patriottica)* were small, mobile units of Italian partisans during World War II, primarily active between 1943 and 1945. These groups, typically composed of anti-fascist volunteers, carried out acts of sabotage, assassination, and guerrilla warfare against the German occupation forces and Italian Fascist collaborators, particularly in urban areas. The GAP played a significant role in the Italian Resistance movement, contributing to the liberation of Italy from fascist rule.

[43] The original expression in Italian used by the artists was "fastidioso."

> "We decided what form we could give to this anti-monument that denounces something but also builds something else. And so, we thought of giving people these hundred antifascist bricks, so they could write their collective antifascist manifesto." (07BO AC).

This decision established the work as a device in the form of a "game," sanctioning its functional and interactive characteristics, as well as its transformative nature. In this instance, the concept of 'anti-monument' took the form of a 'wall' or 'tower' – terms the artists frequently used to describe the volume of the art-work – with an irregular 16-sided base that could be developed vertically through the addition of 'stackable modules.' These modules, and their stackability, are crucial elements of the work as a game-device. The modules consist of one hundred cardboard boxes in the shape of parallelepipeds, constructed by 06BO A in the UAP studio in Rastignano and painted with white plaster. As highlighted by the earlier testimonies, the artists referred to the modules on various occasions as both "bricks" and "antifascist bricks," explicitly invoking two fundamental concepts that form, at a supralocal level, the immaterial site of this art-work: 'antifascism' and the related ideas of 'unity,' 'construction,' 'memory,' and 'political expression.'

All one hundred modules were then transported by the artists to the material site where the street festival took place, specifically at the intersection of Via Ferrarese and Via Algardi in the Bolognina area. At this site, the artists also installed a wooden platform painted white, which would serve as the base on which the various modules would later be stacked, thereby sanctioning the area of the art-work. This area encompasses both the platform and the volume that gradually develops through the stacking of the modules, with the modules themselves becoming an integral part of the art-work's area.

In addition to constructing the cardboard modules, the artists simultaneously established the rules for direct and indirect interaction with the art-work. These rules were presented in the form of a 'comic strip,' created by one of the UAP artists. The comic strip consists of five panels, each depicting, through illustrations of fictional scenes and accompanying texts, the sequence of actions that a participant must follow to interact with the work and its elements—particularly the stackable 'modules.'

In the first panel, arranged from left to right and top to bottom, the hands of a person are shown lifting one of the modules from the ground, picking it up from a disordered pile. Next to this scene, a text guides the participant's actions through three questions:

> "FORMULATE A THOUGHT BASED ON THESE QUESTIONS. / – HOW DO YOU DEFINE YOURSELF POLITICALLY? – WHICH

> SOCIAL CONCEPT DO YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT? – WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ANTI-FASCIST TODAY?"[44]

The second panel continues the sequence, depicting the same person writing on the "brick" while being observed by other characters. These observers are not random but represent a rule established by the artists concerning indirect interaction with the art-work: participants can engage by watching others perform direct actions such as 'picking up the module,' 'writing on the module,' and so forth. The accompanying text reads:

> "TAKE AN ANTIFASCIST BRICK. / WRITE YOUR THOUGHT, A FEW WORDS OR A LONG SENTENCE, YOU DECIDE. / YOU CAN USE 1 OR 2 SIDES. DO NOT USE PROPER NAMES OF PEOPLE, PARTIES, COUNTRIES, OR TERRITORIES."[45]

The artists explained that this rule was intended to prevent the art-work from becoming overly politicized in favor of any specific party or ideology. They were concerned, for instance, that if many participants wrote the same party name or slogan, it would undermine the collective nature of the work:

> "if you imagine people writing: Vote Potere al Popolo [an Italian left-wing political party]… fifty people write that, it's no longer a collective idea… Everyone signs their own name or… We were afraid… that a Lega supporter would pass by and write Matteo Salvini [leader of the Italian far-right party Lega]…" (07BO AC).

Additionally, the act of 'writing on the module' explicitly references, according to the artists, the tradition of street art, graffiti, and murals widespread throughout Bologna, which is part of the immaterial site of the art-work:

> "It comes from there, from murals…" (06BO A). "It also comes a bit from the neighborhood, where everyone writes… it's a very common political means in Bologna… because there aren't many ways to express yourself… but if something happens… that's how it's done." (07BO AC).

The third and fourth panels first show a module with the words "Resistance / NO BORDERS" being placed on top of another box labeled "ANTIFA." This scene is followed by a top-down view of the fully instantiated art-work, with all one hundred modules written on and stacked to form the volume of a 'wall' or 'tower,'

[44] The original text in Italian reads: "FORMULA UN PENSIERO PARTENDO DA QUESTE DOMANDE. / – COME TI DEFINISCI A LIVELLO POLITICO? – QUALE CONCETTO SOCIALE CONSIDERI IMPORTANTE? – COSA SIGNIFICA ESSERE ANTI-FASCISTA OGGI?". Own translation.

[45] The original text in Italian reads: "PRENDI UN MATTONE ANTIFASCISTA. / SCRIVI IL TUO PENSIERO, POCHE PAROLE O UNA FRASE LUNGA, DECIDI TU. / PUOI USARE 1 O 2 LATI. NON USARE NOMI PROPRI DI PERSONE, PARTITI, PAESI O TERRITORI". Own translation.

as sanctioned by the artists. This moment corresponds simultaneously to time T2 and T3 of the art-work, embodying two complementary modes of instantiation: instantiation by addition and extension, and instantiation by reference. Connecting these two panels, the artists added the text:

> "PLACE THE BRICK FOLLOWING THE DESIGN, ADDING YOUR IDEA TO THAT OF OTHERS."[46]

The fifth and final panel of the comic symbolically encapsulates the concepts that characterize the supralocal level of the immaterial site of the work, as previously mentioned. In this scene, a platoon of bald men, all identical and dressed in the typical uniform of the 'Blackshirts' (a rank in the fascist militia), is shown marching through an urban setting. Opposing this platoon, three of the "antifascist bricks" from the art-work are being 'thrown,' bearing the words "To Resist" and "STOP OIL." Meanwhile, a group of four characters of different ages and genders observes the scene, waving a flag with the symbol of the sickle, hammer, and star, which is generally associated with the Italian Communist Party. The scene is accompanied by the slogan-text:

> "TO REMEMBER IS TO FIGHT!"[47]

The comic was printed on the front of an A4 paper sheet, which is also part of the art-work's area, accompanied by the inscription:

> "ANTI-MONUMENT RESISTANT. The game of 100 antifascist bricks to build a collective political identity."[48]

On the back of the sheet, the artists included two texts: one summarizing the concept behind the art-work and the other explaining the 'anti-monumental' artistic research conducted by the UAP. At the top of the page, a question further underscores the connection between the work and the contemporary Italian political landscape:

> "What kind of cultural politics can oppose the openly reactionary agenda that the government offers us?"

Finally, there are two additional 'weak' rules sanctioned by the artists for interaction with the art-work. The first concerns an interaction action performed exclusively by the artists themselves while the work was in progress. As participants stacked the modules on top of each other, the artists would join the "bricks" by

[46] The original text in Italian reads: "POSIZIONA IL MATTONE SEGUENDO IL DISEGNO, AGGIUNGENDO LA TUA IDEA A QUELLA DEGLI ALTRI". Own translation.
[47] The original text in Italian reads: "RICORDARE SIGNIFICA LOTTARE!". Own translation.
[48] The original text in Italian reads: "ANTI-MONUMENTO RESISTENTE. Il gioco dei 100 mattoni antifascisti per costruire un'identità politica collettiva". Own translation.

applying putty in the gaps between one module and another. Additionally, the artists created a row of modules, each bearing on two sides a fragment of the poem *In Praise of Dialectics* (1951), written by Bertolt Brecht. This row of modules was placed by the artists themselves on the growing volume of the art-work once it had reached a median height, which, in reality, was arbitrarily decided by the artists.

In summary, the essential element of the 'module,' existing in one hundred copies, along with the double-sided A4 sheet containing the 'comic strip' that establishes the interaction rules with the art-work, together constitute an inseparable partial instantiation of the art-work, as they are integral to its media profile.

4.4 Case study 06BO – *Serendippo*: Programs

The UAP *Serendippo* was established in Bologna between 2006 and 2007 by two artists, whom I will refer to as 09BO ACR and 10BO AC. Initially, the founding members were pursuing degrees in the natural sciences, but later transitioned into the independent publishing sector before eventually beginning their artistic practice.

> "We started […] in Vicolo de' Facchini, which is a street in the historic center of Bologna. It's a narrow alley, so it has always been considered a degraded street, a marginal street... a bit of a periphery of the historic center. There, we had a publishing house, a bookstore, and a library... also a printing press [...] and we were often open at night, so we worked with the people who lived in that alley. So even the homeless and drug addicts who came and went, who lived in that alley. That project… which was a project funded by the Municipality of Bologna... like, it won a grant from the Municipality of Bologna... it was part of a series of funded projects… Well, in the end, it was never really funded. So, we found ourselves with a huge debt. We had to close the space, even though it continued to be an activity that gathered a lot of energy around it. In that same year, between 2007 and 2008, the Municipality of Bologna decided to start a campaign to erase the writings on the walls of Vicolo de' Facchini, identifying the writing on the wall as a problem of degradation of the alley… but in reality that alley had no lighting, no public bathrooms, no care for the people who lived there [...] So at that moment we decided to start a project that involved different things… Asia and Africa, because we focused on the countries of Asia and Africa… the people who lived [in the alley], the local artists. And we started a project called *BodyTracing*… the traces of the feminine in the body of the city. With *BodyTracing*, we involved a series of writers, artists […] which collected all the writings on the walls and [with those writings] an art collection began [...] It was a bit like homeopathy for degradation. That meant... Let's focus on those who live in this space, let's not focus on the writings on the walls, because they are not the only degradation. Our battle started from there… which essentially led to nothing, because after twenty years they still erase the writings on the walls." (09BO ACR)

The artistic work of the practice primarily focused on social and political themes related to local urban dynamics. Their approach was characterized by curatorial, participatory, and laboratory-based actions. The practice was exclusively centered on the city of Bologna, particularly its historic center. The significance of this focus was such that the map/outline of the *Centro Storico* was used as the practice's logo, representing its publicly portrayed visual identity.

09BO ACR and 10BO AC were the only permanent members of the practice. Although they frequently collaborated with other local and international artists, these collaborators never became permanent members of the UAP. As a result, the practice was organized as a duo and legally registered as a nonprofit association (*APS – Associazione di Promozione Sociale*).

UAP code	**Art-work code**	**Site**	**Art-work expressions**	**Art-work placing**	**Art-work mobility**	**Art-work temporality**	**Time**
06BO	AW17BO *Disegnare Dialoghi*	Walls of electricity cabins in the Trilogia Navile complex	Street art	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	2019 to 2020
		INA-Casa residential complex "Cavedone"	Street art Performance				2022 to 2023
	AW18BO *PubbliCITTÀ*	All the TPer bus stop Line 28	Installation Curatorial Visual art	Multi-site	Fixed	Temporary	2018 – 2019 – 2020 - 2021 -2022 – 2023 – 2024 - ongoing
		TPer bus stops at Bologna Central Train Station					
		Ex ticket office TPer Lame-Marconi					
		Parking lot APCOA					
		Ticket office TPer Fiera Piazza Costituzione					
		Civic Center in Via Massimo Gorki					

		Albani Market					
		Piazza Aldrovandi					
		Piazza Verdi					
		Piazza del VIII Agosto					
		Shops in Vicolo de' Facchini					
		Octagonal kiosk TPer in Via IV Novembre					
		All the TPer bus stop Line 27					

Table 10: Case study 06BO: Urban art-works and related Urban sites (from Bologna, Italy).

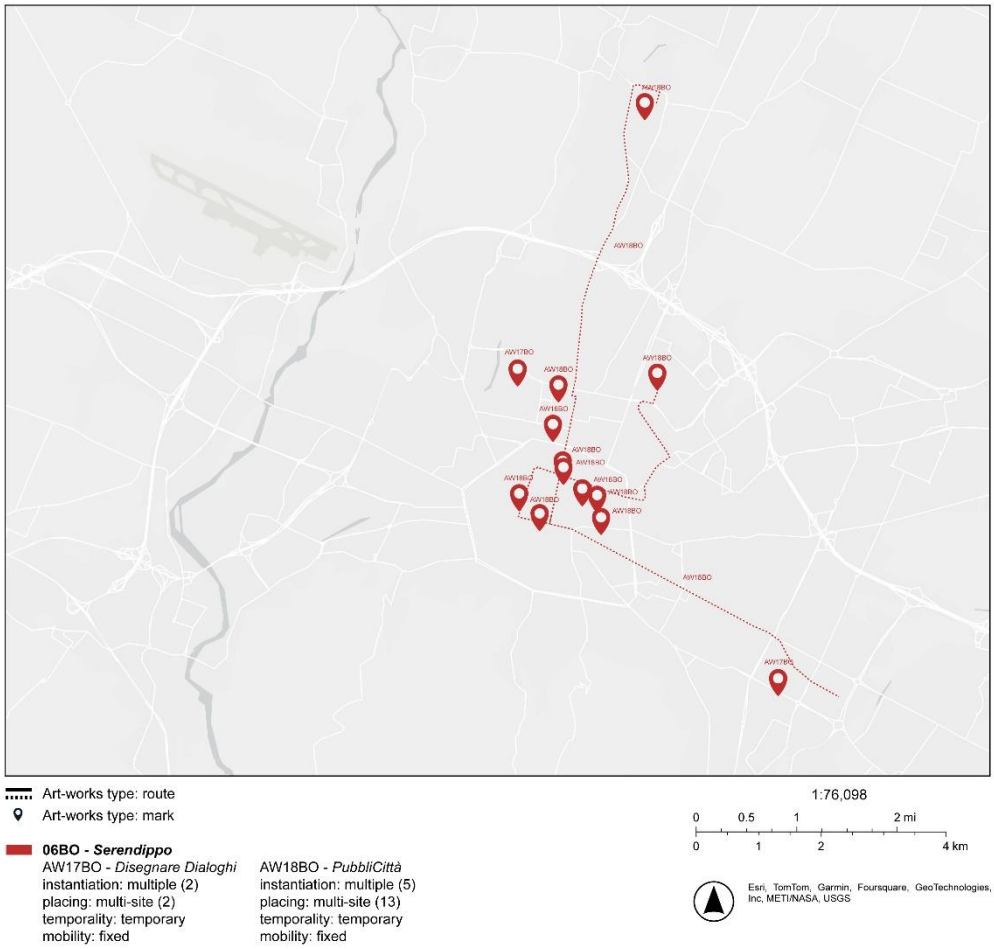


Figure 62: Case study 05BO: map of Urban art-works and related Urban sites; focus at Municipality of Bologna level (from Bologna, Italy). Illustration: own work.

My first encounter with the artists of the UAP took place in a bar located in the center of the Bolognina area, where they often gathered to work. During this meeting, our conversation alternated between dialogue and periods where the artists, particularly 10BO AC, focused on their work on the laptop, often involving me in it. From this initial discussion, I noticed that this approach exemplified their way of organizing their artistic practice – a production that largely disregarded the need for a fixed, permanent space, such as a studio, instead favoring higher levels of relationality, flexibility, and mobility. This aspect highlighted significant differences compared to the practices of 01BO and 04BO and was one of the main reasons that led me to consider this UAP as relevant for a case study.

Although Serendippo was organized as a non-profit association with a legal headquarters – corresponding to the private residence of one of the two artists, which was occasionally used as a space for events, exhibitions, and artist residencies – the primary setting of the practice, where the artists worked most frequently, was the 'street.'

The 'street,' understood as "every public urban space in the city," was one of the central themes of the artistic 'research' of the UAP. The artists *heavily specified*

(Caldarola, 2020, p.105) their art-works to the Bolognese urban context, making this focus a key point of interest. In 2008, the artists used to rent a commercial space located in Vicolo de' Facchini, which was later closed. This same alley became a focal point during my various exchanges with the artists over time and a recurring subject in their narratives. In late 2023 to early 2024, the practice acquired a new space in the same alley, which was donated to the artists by a local carpenter who previously owned it. The practice later transformed the space into what they described as a "place of freedom, creativity of labor, open to all proposals from those who share with Serendippo a vision of art and public city." Although I did not include this space in the analysis of this case study, it nonetheless served as another exemplary instance of the relationship between the UAP's work and the perceived changes in the city.



Figure 63: Vicolo de' Facchini, located in the historic center of Bologna. Photo: own work (RGI).

The practice also focused on other thematic areas, such as establishing participatory relationships and actions with the city's residents and reclaiming public space as a means of "enhancing and protecting" it. This effort included meticulously mapping the murals, graffiti, and unauthorized writings on the walls of the historic center, leading to the creation of a significant photographic archive accumulated over the years.

Another key area of interest was the artists' background, which was initially unrelated to the arts. In addition to identifying as 'artists,' they often referred to themselves as "scientists." This was a unique aspect compared to the other two practices, 01BO and 04BO.

A third point of interest was that the UAP operated exclusively in Bologna, and among the three cases analyzed, Serendippo was the practice most focused on this specific city. They primarily created art-works in the historic center, occasionally extending their scope to areas of the outer city, such as the Savena and Navile neighborhoods. The artists also collaborated extensively with local artists, cultural associations, consortia, and social cooperatives, as well as multinational companies. They maintained a dense network of relationships with many other Bolognese UAPs, including frequent collaboration with 04BO. While Serendippo mostly operated within Bologna, they occasionally engaged with contexts outside the city, primarily through invitations extended to artists from other cities in the region, elsewhere in Italy, or from abroad.

A fourth center of interest was the 'direction' of the artistic work of the practice, which, much like practice 06BO, was predominantly – if not exclusively – focused on the urban public space of Bologna, especially the streets and walls of its historic center, disregarding settings such as art galleries and private commissions. Occasionally, the artists supplemented this production with independent publishing work through their own publishing house, where they released artist books, essays, self-productions, and photographic books.

The nature of the practice's work constituted a fifth and final center of interest. Similar to practice 04BO, the art-works produced by the practice were predominantly temporary and existed in multiple instantiations across different urban locations in Bologna. For example, they frequently revisited the same urban sites with the same art-works, sometimes on an annual basis, an approach exemplified by AW17BO *'Disegnare Dialoghi,'* and particularly by AW18BO *'PubbliCITTÀ.'*

A distinctive characteristic of this UAP's work was the composite nature of almost all the art-works they produced. In the context of this case study, these works could be understood as *programs* initiated autonomously by the artistic duo and conducted collaboratively with other local artists and associations. Using an approach similar to curatorship, these programs brought together various street art actions with a pronounced *subversive* (Caldarola 2020, p.163) character, utilizing diverse artistic forms such as murals, stickers, posters, installations, and performances. This approach highly emphasized processuality, with less focus on the production of objects. Additionally, the duo placed significant importance on the design of the publicly portrayed visual identity of their art-works.



Figure 64: The logo of the UAP 06BO, depicting the boundaries of the historic center of Bologna. Source: the artists (PGI).

Another facet of processuality was evident in the practice's intervention *instruments*, which were often repeated across various urban sites, usually with slight variations. These immaterial instruments involved the creation and use of public thematic calls, phased work plans, and extensive reliance on maps, cartographies, and technical drawings – tools commonly associated with architectural design and urban planning – as well as official legal and administrative documents. 'Collaboration agreements' ('*patti di collaborazione'*) [49] with the Municipality of Bologna, such as those used in the creation of AW17BO, were also integral to their approach.

The artists paid particular attention to both these immaterial instruments and the physical *supports* they used, which became a sanctioned part of the media profile of the practice's art-works. This focus on supports was significantly less emphasized in the other two UAPs. The practice frequently utilized 'street' supports, such as panels covering bus shelter roofs, masonry or plastered walls, paved or cemented surfaces, garden pavements, and shop windows. The media they predominantly used included colored Sayerlack paints, aerosol paints, paper and photographic paper, adhesive paper, ink, glue, and digital media like QR codes.

Serendippo was one of the last UAPs I engaged with. Our first encounter took place in January 2023, and from that time until the end of January 2024, I studied this practice. This latter date also marked the conclusion of my fieldwork in Bologna. During this period, the artists concentrated on two main art-works: AW17BO – *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* (Figures 65, 66, 68 and 69) and AW18BO – *'PubbliCITTÀ'* (Figures 71, 72, 73 and 78). I partially followed the CP of AW17BO and reconstructed it through SRI sessions and visual material. As for AW18BO, I examined its instantiations from 2020 and 2024, utilizing both SRIs and semi-structured interviews, along with visual material.

4.4.1 AW17BO – *Disegnare Dialoghi*

Snapshot: AW17BO – 'Disegnare Dialoghi' (instantiation 2019-2020)

The first instantiation of the art-work AW17BO – *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* took place between 2019 and 2020, focusing on the urban site known as Trilogia Navile.

[49] Collaboration agreements are formal agreements between two or more parties who work together to achieve a common goal. They are administrative instruments that regulate the collaboration process. In the governmental context, collaboration agreements are used to promote cooperation and coordination among local government entities. These agreements can be entered into between neighboring municipalities, regions, local authorities, or citizens and local administrations to address common issues, improve public services, share resources, or develop joint projects. In 2014, the Municipality of Bologna introduced the "Regulation on collaboration between citizens and Administration for the care and regeneration of urban common goods" in the Italian legislative landscape. This regulation allows private citizens to propose collaboration projects for the care and urban regeneration of material, immaterial, and digital common goods to the Municipal administration. See: https://www.fondazioneinnovazioneurbana.it/pattidicollaborazione (last accessed: March 03, 2024).

This complex, comprising recently built private residences (constructed in 2014), was situated on the former site of a fruit and vegetable market, west of the Bolognina area in the Navile district. The art-work/program involved painting ten murals on electricity cabins within the residential complex. Ten local artists, selected through a public thematic call by a commission including members of the UAP, created the designs for these murals. The art-work's conceptual plan was executed through a collaboration agreement with the Municipality of Bologna and other local associations and social cooperatives. The murals were painted by artists chosen by the UAP commission, approximately ten asylum seekers participating in the Nausicaa Project,[50] residents of the complex, and UAP artists themselves (Figure 22). A notable aspect of this instantiation was its focus on professional training aimed at the social and work inclusion of asylum seekers, with mural painting being a key component of this training.



Figure 65: Instantiation 2019-20 of the art-work AW17BO '*Disegnare Dialoghi*' and its site, the walls of electricity cabins in the Trilogia Navile complex. Source: the artists (PGI).



Figure 66: Instantiation 2019-20 of the art-work AW17BO '*Disegnare Dialoghi*' and its site, the walls of electricity cabins in the Trilogia Navile complex (visible in the background). Source: the artists (PGI).

[50] A housing and employment inclusion project started by the Municipality of Bologna, funded by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies and managed by a consortium of social cooperatives. See: https://progettonausicaa.it/ (last accessed: March 03, 2024).

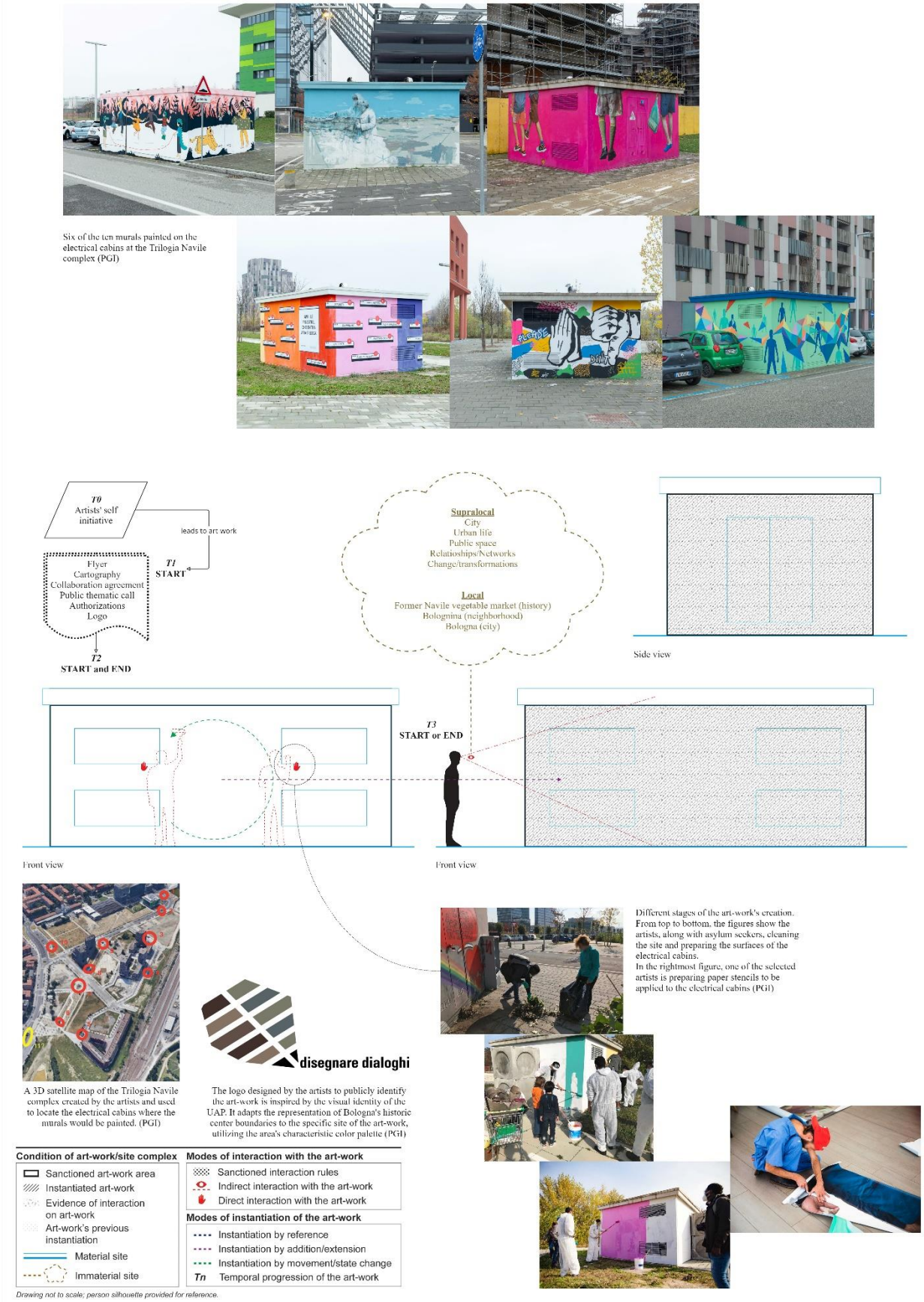


Figure 67: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the instantiation 2019-21 of the art-work AW17BO *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* rendered via a process flow diagram. (High definition diagram in Appendix G).

The art-work AW17BO – *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* began (T0) with its first instantiation, self-initiated by the artists between 2019 and 2020. The process leading to the ideation of this art-work, in both of its instantiations, was not only thoroughly reconstructed by the artists during our numerous conversations but also meticulously documented in two written reports – one for each instantiation – compiled by the artists at the conclusion of each. The presence of these written reports underscores a fundamental characteristic of this UAP: a modus operandi that is oriented towards the careful planning, production, implementation, and promotion of artistic programs, utilizing immaterial instruments such as legal and administrative documents, timelines, and end-of-project reports.

The ideation of the art-work began with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The artists shared this process with me at a time when the second instantiation of the art-work was already underway:

> "*'Disegnare Dialoghi'* was born during the lockdown period, so in 2020, just before... At Trilogia Navile, now it's moving forward in Savena... And *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* addressed the issue of Trilogia Navile… because Trilogia Navile has this huge residential complex, okay… that's the Trilogia... and there's a huge student dormitory. But above all, since it was still a construction site in progress, it became a place of residence for some homeless young people. There were these structures, cabins where some of these young people lived. And that's where we started working. And there was the former headquarters of XM24 [a historic social center in Bologna, now demolished]. Not only that. There's the *'Campi Aperti'* market. So, there were the homeless… there was the fruit and vegetable market… the Tettoia Nervi." (09BO ACR) "An area undergoing great change, but with a series of unresolved issues related not only to the type of constructions that were made… and therefore to the type of housing that was chosen to be built. But also, to the area itself. The area is where they decided to build the new Bologna City Hall. An area that was previously occupied by the fruit and vegetable market and today faces, on the same street, public housing. So, housing […] inhabited by ninety percent of people who are part of that periphery. So, we intervened in an area that had the problems of a periphery, even though it was an area where luxury apartments were being sold." (10BO AC)

In these circumstances, the first operation carried out by the artists (at time T1) was the creation of a 'flyer,' as they described:

> "in which we asked people to respond to what this space is and to whom it belongs. What is this space, and who does it belong to... [...] It was, after all, a way of gathering people. The response we received was this micro-network of citizens, people who simply wanted artists." (09BO ACR).

The flyer predominantly featured an illustration titled:

with the remaining space occupied by a text written by the artists. This text offered a critical reflection on the urban transformations occurring at the time in the "urban space between P. Gobetti, D. Insolera streets, and the Bologna Arcoveggio railway tracks." The artists viewed these transformations as an

> "attempt [by the City of Bologna, an entity with which the UAP consistently engages in critical dialogue across its various art-works] to create new centralities without having either the economic capacity or the clarity to embrace biodiversity." (extracts from the flyer document).

The flyer concluded with the question:

> "WHO DOES THIS SPACE BELONG TO?"[51]

and an invitation to contact the artists by "sending us ideas" to their email address. The question "Who does this space belong to?" and the use of flyers have become a recurring practice of the UAP, employed in many of their other works, including AW18BO – *'PubbliCITTÀ,'* an art-work I will address later. The flyer served as the first tool for the artists to survey the chosen site for the art-work, encompassing both its material and immaterial components. It was created in A4 format and distributed to the site's inhabitants both in print and digitally, ensuring broad dissemination.

Following the distribution of the flyer, the artists continued the ideation of the art-work by creating five additional immaterial instruments, which are fundamental to the art-work's media profile and emphasize its programmatic and participatory nature.

First, the reconnaissance of the material site continued with the creation of a 'cartography,' a 3D map derived from a satellite photo of the Trilogia Navile complex area in the Bolognina district. On this map, the artists identified ten electricity cabins on which they would intervene.

Simultaneously, the artists worked on drafting the second foundational instrument of the art-work, the 'collaboration agreement.' This administrative document formalized the collaboration between the artists and five other local and international entities, including cultural associations, social cooperatives, and a multinational paint manufacturer, for the creation of the art-work in partnership with the City of Bologna. This cooperation took place within the framework of the Nausicaa Project, an inclusion initiative launched by the City of Bologna, through which the artists also sanctioned the participation of ten asylum seekers. For these participants, involvement in the art-work would serve as voluntary professional training and job placement.

The collaboration agreement outlined the

[51] The original text in Italian reads: "DI CHI È QUESTO SPAZIO?". Own translation.

> "shared care objectives and actions" (as stated in the administrative document)

articulated in a "project action" of "co-design" that included:

> "the care and redevelopment of walls and urban furniture affected by graphic vandalism, both through cleaning and decor restoration interventions and through redevelopment actions with forms of aerosol art or similar; these interventions may also be carried out through training workshops or in connection with other project initiatives promoted by the Administration; / care and redevelopment of urban areas or green spaces through on-site training workshops; / complementary initiatives aimed at linguistic reinforcement, socialization, territorial animation, and social and cultural inclusion." The agreement also defined the financial contribution for the realization of the art-work and officially identified the intervention sites as determined by the artists through the 'cartography' instrument, highlighting the local government's intent, as part of the collaboration, to authorize targeted interventions in "certain areas of the city requiring redevelopment actions."

Alongside the collaboration agreement, two other essential instruments were created for the art-work: the 'logo' and the drafting and dissemination of a 'public thematic call.'

The 'logo' is a crucial element of both the AW17BO art-work and the UAP as a whole, as it is a recurring practice in all their works. For this art-work, as with many previous ones, the artists drew inspiration from the logo that identifies the UAP—a simplified representation of the geographical boundaries of Bologna's historic center. This symbolic representation was then re-specified to align with the theme of the art-work, adapting the visual language to reflect the specific issues and concepts being addressed.

The logo is an integral part of both the public communication of the art-work and the art-work itself, and it appears prominently in the 'public thematic call.' The artists describe the logo as follows:

> "The logo designed for the intervention on the electricity cabins aims to combine different categories of keywords: - TERRITORY; / - FUTURE; / - ARCHITECTURE; / - REAPPROPRIATION. The goal was to find a graphic symbol that could highlight the territorial transformation taking place in Bolognina and simultaneously recall the purpose of the Serendippo Association [and other entities that signed the collaboration agreement] to use contemporary art to allow citizens to reclaim their urban space. As a distinctive aspect of the territory, the pattern of the buildings in the former fruit and vegetable market complex was chosen to emphasize the *metissage* of the neighborhood and the plan of Bologna's historic center, transformed into a leaf so that green becomes a pervasive element

> and builds a continuous, physical, and perceptual fabric with the surrounding environment […].” (from the 2019 public thematic call document)

Alongside the logo instrument, the ‘public thematic call’ underscores the curatorial approach of the artists and the programmatic and participatory nature of the art-work. This call is presented as a written document in which the artists issue an open invitation to local artists, asking them to propose ten murals—defined here as the essential element ‘image’—that respond to the theme *‘Disegnare Dialoghi.’*

The document states:

> “Drawing dialogues means welcoming and respecting diversity as they evolve into collective practices; imagining space and place as moments of proximity, and engaging with space without overpowering it. Artists are asked to propose a project that can represent the dialogue between home and city, between those who live in Bolognina and those who pass through; between interior and exterior, between private and public, between individuality and collectivity. [...] Intervening on electricity cabins means transforming an object of public utility into an element of urban furniture. The ultimate goal is to create in Bolognina a network that connects artists, merchants, and citizens, establishing a pervasive relationship between contemporary art and the city.” (from the 2019 public thematic call document)

The public thematic call was then disseminated digitally, online, via the artists’ website and their social networks. It also outlined the requirements for participation, the submission process, deadlines, technical specifications of the ‘images,’ their intended use, as well as the selection and exclusion criteria. The selection was made by a committee composed of the artists and other parties involved in the collaboration agreement. Once the ten ‘images,’ or proposed murals, were selected, they were compiled by the UAP artists into an additional report and made public through their digital channels, awaiting the direct involvement of the selected artists to execute the murals. I will not discuss each selected mural here. However, an analysis of these murals revealed that the ‘images’ represent a fundamental component of the art-work and its media profile, as they evoke the immaterial site of the work. At a supralocal level, they reference concepts such as ‘city,’ ‘urban life,’ ‘public space,’ ‘relationships,’ and ‘transformations.’ At a local level, elements emerge that emphasize the profound, inseparable connection of the art-work with the city of Bologna, including the memory and history of the former ‘Navile vegetable market,’ which is tied to the Bolognina area and, by extension, to the specific identity of ‘Bologna.’

Finally, the last instrument created by the artists for this art-work is the ‘authorizations,’ which are legal documents in the form of contracts and written agreements between the artists and other relevant parties. These documents sanction

the conditions for carrying out specific actions on the material site of the work. For example, one such document states:

> "The works will be carried out solely on the external walls of the concrete structures without in any way damaging the structure or compromising its use. The worksite must be left free and clean by the deadline set for the completion of the interventions (November 30, 2020)." (from an authorization document related to the 2019-2020 instantiation of the art-work)

The six instruments—'flyer,' 'collaboration agreement,' 'public thematic call,' 'authorizations,' 'logo,' and 'cartography'—collectively constitute essential elements of the comprehensive set of rules sanctioned by the artists for the complete instantiation of the work. This instantiation occurs first through direct and then indirect interaction with the area of the art-work. A distinctive feature of this area is that it necessarily corresponds to a specific zone of the material site of the work, understood as the physical support of the work itself, as sanctioned by the artists. In the case of the first instantiation of AW17BO, the physical support takes the tangible form of the walls of the electricity cabins. This support is directly manipulated through a direct action—'painting the mural'—carried out by the selected artists and participating asylum seekers, based on the ten 'images' selected through the public thematic call. This process alters the state of the support itself, thereby fully instantiating the art-work through the modes of instantiation by state change and by addition. The murals painted on the external walls of the electricity cabins also represent the material evidence of interaction with the art-work, as sanctioned by the artists.

Together, the set of rules represented by the six instruments, the area of the art-work—the material support—and the ten 'images' selected to be painted on the electricity cabins constitute a partial instantiation of the art-work as a whole. However, two additional components were sanctioned as necessary for the effective completion of the instantiation. The first component involves an indirect interaction with the art-work, which consists of the casual or voluntary encounter with the murals once they are painted, and the observation of them by passersby or visitors. The second component is immaterial and pertains to the professional training of the asylum seekers who participated in the art-work. This training is completed through their interaction with the work, such as cleaning the cabins and painting the murals, alongside activities involving "educational and linguistic, artistic, and cultural exchange," as detailed in the artists' report.

The time span for the complete instantiation of the art-work, marking the transition from time T2 to time T3, extended over approximately a year. As the artists noted:

> "Our process was long. But *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* at Trilogia Navile shows exactly how we move. So, we cleaned. We painted white… it took a very

long time. These structures remained white, without any writing, for like… six months or so. Then the other artists arrived…" (10BO AC).

Snapshot: AW17BO – 'Disegnare Dialoghi' (instantiation 2022-23)

In the second instantiation of AW17BO, which took place between 2022 and 2023, the art-work preserved the overarching objectives and intervention instruments of the initial instantiation but introduced two notable changes. First, the focus shifted to a different urban site within Bologna: the INA-Casa residential complex, commonly known as *'il Cavedone,'* located in the Mazzini area of the Savena neighborhood. This complex, built during the post-war period as part of the national INA-Casa housing plan (1949–1963), features courtyard-style buildings.[52] The theme of "housing autonomy" became central in this context. Second, this instantiation of the art-work incorporated two concurrent actions. The first involved collective performances, including experiential walks with residents of the complex, local artists, architects, officials from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, art critics, anthropologists, and sociologists. These walks aimed to explore the history of the residential complex and its surrounding neighborhood, focusing on the art-work's thematic emphasis (Figure 68). For the second action, local artists were selected to paint murals through a public call for proposals overseen by a commission that included members of the UAP. This process mirrored the approach of the first instantiation of AW17BO. The murals were created on the shutters of the local market on Via Corrado Mazzoni (Figure 69) and on the walls of several electricity cabins within a green area of the residential complex.

[52] The *INA-Casa Plan* was a public housing construction program initiated in 1949 and completed in 1963 by the National Insurance Institute (INA), a social security institution, under the initiative of the then Minister of Labor, Amintore Fanfani. The main purpose of the INA-Casa Plan was to provide low-cost housing for low to middle-income families and those facing housing difficulties following World War II. The Plan had a significant impact on post-war reconstruction in Italy, helping to address the severe housing crisis of the time and providing housing solutions for millions of people. Over the years, INA-Casa underwent changes and additions, but it remained one of the country's primary housing policy instruments for several decades.



Figure 68: Instantiation 2022-23 of the art-work AW17BO '*DisegnareDialoghi*' and its site, the INA-Casa residential complex "Cavedone." Source: the artists (PGI).



Figure 69: Instantiation 2022-23 of the art-work AW17BO '*DisegnareDialoghi*' and its site, the INA-Casa residential complex "Cavedone." Source: the artists (PGI).

Similar to the first instantiation, the murals were collaboratively painted by the selected artists and asylum seekers involved in the Nausicaa Project. Additionally, the artists once again structured the artwork's CP through a collaboration agreement with the Municipality of Bologna and various local associations and social cooperatives.



The figure on the left shows one of the murals painted on the surfaces of the market shutters at the Cavedone residential complex in the Savena district. The figure on the right depicts a typical interaction with the art-work: in this case, people who participated in the art-work's creation and residents of the complex gather to celebrate its completion (PGI)

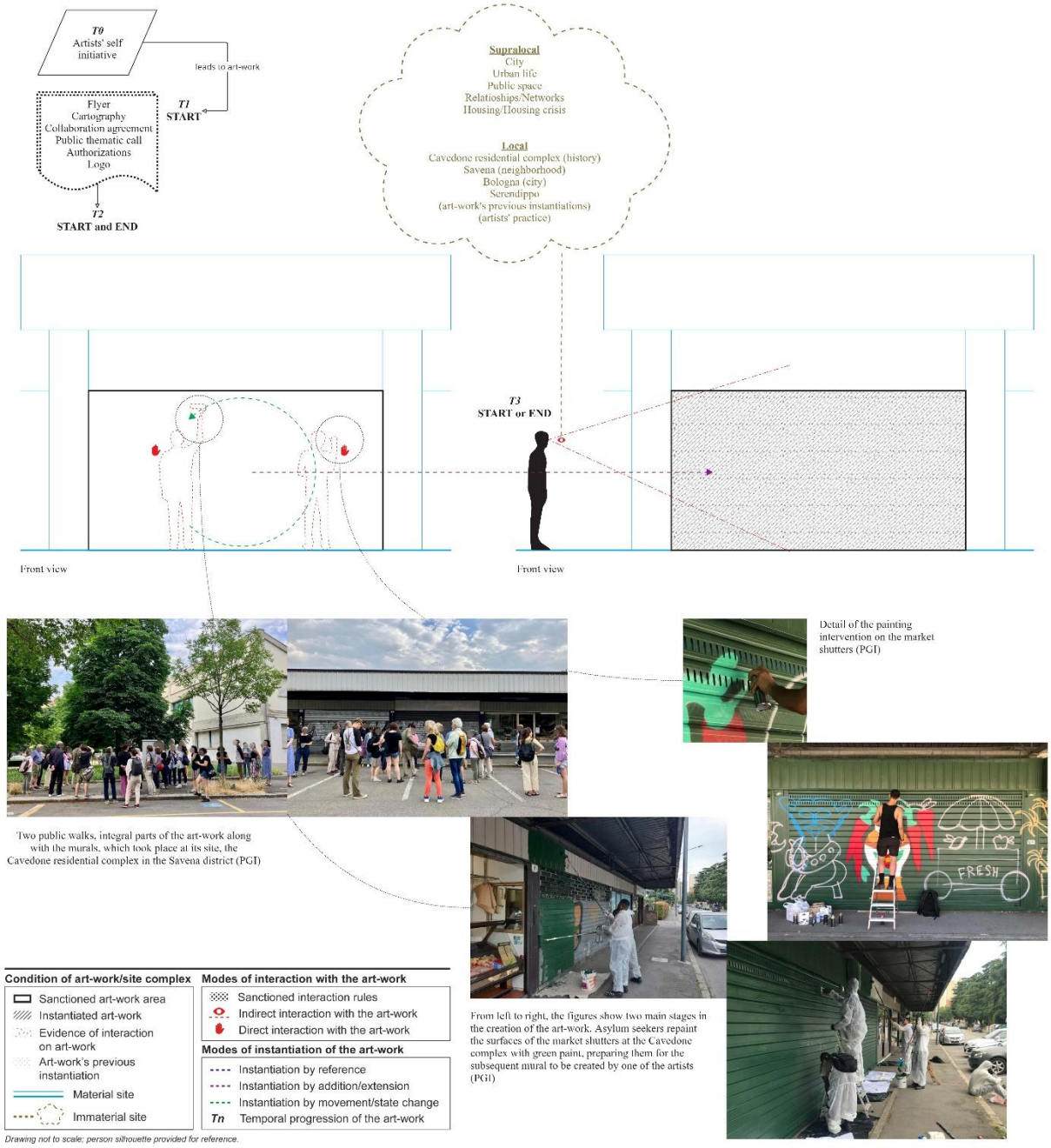


Figure 70: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the instantiation 2022-23 of the art-work AW17BO *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* rendered via a process flow diagram. (High definition diagram in Appendix H).

The second instantiation of the art-work AW17BO – *'Disegnare Dialoghi,'* carried out between 2022 and 2023, began (T0) as a self-initiated piece by the artists and was described as a

> "continuation of the work" and a "natural evolution of the process" (09BO ACR)

previously initiated with the first instantiation. In my analysis, this instantiation is conceptualized in these terms, as the methods sanctioned by the artists for the program implemented between 2019 and 2020 in the Navile district were exactly replicated at the site of the second instantiation, the Savena district, specifically in the INA-Casa residential complex known as *'il Cavedone'*:

> "Because the principle is always the same." (10BO AC)

Moreover, many of the individuals who contributed to the first instantiation of the art-work also collaborated in this second one, moving from one site to another within Bologna:

> "[For this art-work] the people from Trilogia Navile moved to Savena, […] the collectives moved with us to Savena. […] We brought along our dispersed micro-community. The one that follows us in the crossing. That crosses the sites of the city." (09BO ACR)

Given these continuities, my focus here will be on highlighting the main particularities that emerged regarding this second instantiation of the art-work.

The artists were the first to reflect on the re-specification of the art-work at the Savena district site, drawing comparisons with the first instantiation:

> "[The art-work] moved to Savena… Changing the question. Here [at Trilogia Navile] there was the issue of asylum seekers living on the streets… who didn't have a place to live. They lived, precisely, there. And above all, they were without work. So, with them, we carried out a work training process. Instead, regarding Savena […] we were already dealing with the housing issue of these young people... But there was the INA-Casa village... So, we focused on housing, on public housing. So, the theme of this *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* led us to enter the homes of those who now live in the INA-Casa village and ask how the history of public housing has changed… in that geographical location." (09BO ACR)

Building on this reflection, the artists applied the same methods and used the same instruments previously established for the art-work, adapting them to this new theme-site.

The artists produced a new 'flyer' instrument, which once again served as a means to survey the chosen site for the art-work by analyzing its material and immaterial components through the question,

"WHO DOES THIS SPACE BELONG TO?"[53]

The new flyer was created in A4 format and distributed both in print and digital form. However, unlike the previous version, this flyer did not include written critical reflections on the site or illustrations.

'Cartographies' of the INA-Casa *'il Cavedone'* residential complex area were again used to identify the intervention points of the art-work. These points included the external walls of two electricity cabins located near the residential complex along the Carlo Piazzi bike path (whose analysis I have chosen not to include here), and the shutters of the fruit and vegetable market shops on Via Corrado Mazzoni, also located near the residential complex.

Simultaneously, the artists worked on drafting a new 'collaboration agreement,' once again within the framework of the Nausicaa Project. This time, the administrative document involved not only the City of Bologna and the UAP but also five other local and international entities, including new cultural associations and social cooperatives. The agreement also renewed cooperation with the same multinational paint manufacturer and included the participation of seven asylum seekers, who engaged in this project as a voluntary activity for professional training and job placement.

The 'logo,' 'public thematic call,' and 'authorizations' instruments were also re-specified to align with the new "question" characterizing this instantiation, drawing inspiration from those previously created. However, due to a lack of sufficient visual documentation related to these elements, my conclusions are based solely on the artists' accounts. Specifically, the public thematic call was re-specified in terms of the number of selected 'image' proposals – again in the form of murals. This time, the artists chose only three 'images' from three local artists: two to be painted on the electricity cabins and one on the shutters of the local market.

As with the previous instantiation, here I will not discuss the selected murals. However, it is important to note that they continue to evoke the immaterial site integrated into the art-work. In this case, at a supralocal level, the murals reference concepts such as 'city,' 'urban life,' 'public space,' 'relationships,' and, unlike the previous instantiation, 'housing' and the 'housing crisis.' At a local level, the murals reflect the current stories and memories of the residents related to life in the '*Cavedone* residential complex,' closely connected to the 'Savena' district. A distinctive aspect of this instantiation is the local reference to the UAP Serendippo itself, and specifically, to the previous instantiation of AW17BO.

The partial instantiation is once again composed of the set of six instruments—the corpus of rules established by the artists to complete the

[53] The original text in Italian reads: "DI CHI È QUESTO SPAZIO?". Own translation.

instantiation of the art-work through interaction with it—and the area of the art-work, which in this case was identified by the artists as the shutters of the local market and the external walls of the two electricity cabins.

However, one of the main differences from the first instantiation of AW17BO is the inclusion of an additional element in this second instantiation: the 'experiential walks.' These walks, conducted with residents of the INA-Casa complex, local artists, architects, Ministry of Cultural Heritage officials, art critics, anthropologists, and sociologists, were intended, according to the artists, to trace the history of the residential complex and the surrounding neighborhood. The walks are mentioned in the 'collaboration agreement' instrument created for this instantiation, under the section:

> "/ activities of illustration and promotion of the themes addressed by the project to be realized […]."

For the sake of brevity, I have chosen not to include a detailed analysis of these walks here.

4.4.2 AW18BO – *PubbliCITTÀ*

Snapshot: AW18BO – 'PubbliCITTÀ' (instantiation 2020)

The art-work AW18BO – *'PubbliCITTÀ'* and its 2020 and 2024 instantiations featured a program of photographic installations, illustrations, murals, and performances, placed across various urban sites within the historic center of Bologna. These sites were strategically selected to emphasize public transit areas and other significant locations, such as the central train station, the central bus station, bus stops, arcades, and Piazza Maggiore. The artists often described this art-work as a "path of widespread contemporary art" or referred to its instantiations as "exhibitions." Since 2018, the UAP has organized annual instantiations of AW18BO at approximately thirteen different locations in these urban areas. This process involved issuing a public thematic call for proposals from local artists, which were evaluated and selected by a commission that included UAP members. The artists also collaborated with various entities to implement the CP of the art-work and its instantiations, notably partnering with the local transport company TPer, which provided access to several advertising spaces typically reserved for billboards (Figure 71).



Figure 71: One form of the instantiation 2020 of the art-work AW18BO '*PubbliCITTÀ*' and its site, the TPer bus stop Line 27. Source: the artists (PGI).

Depending on the themes proposed in the public thematic call issued by the UAP artists, the art-work was instantiated at the thirteen urban sites in various forms, utilizing a range of 'street' supports as exhibition spaces. The most frequently used support was the side panels made of transparent polycarbonate (Figures 72 and 73) surrounding the TPer bus stops along lines 27 and 28, which traverse the historic center from the Navile neighborhood through Via Indipendenza to the San Donato and Savena neighborhoods. Additional supports included the backlit glass panels of the octagonal kiosk on Via IV Novembre and the windows of the TPer ticket office pavilion at Piazza Costituzione. On these supports, the artists affixed adhesive photographic paper featuring the selected photographs or illustrations. For the 2020 instantiation, the art-work also included several murals and a performance, though these are not analyzed here. As of 2024, the artists have completed a total of five instantiations of the art-work.



Figure 72: One form of the instantiation 2020 of the art-work AW18BO '*PubbliCITTÀ*' and its site, the TPer bus stop Line 28. Source: the artists (PGI).



Figure 73: One form of the instantiation 2020 of the art-work AW18BO '*PubbliCITTÀ*' and its site, the TPer bus stop at the Central Train Station. Source: the artists (PGI).

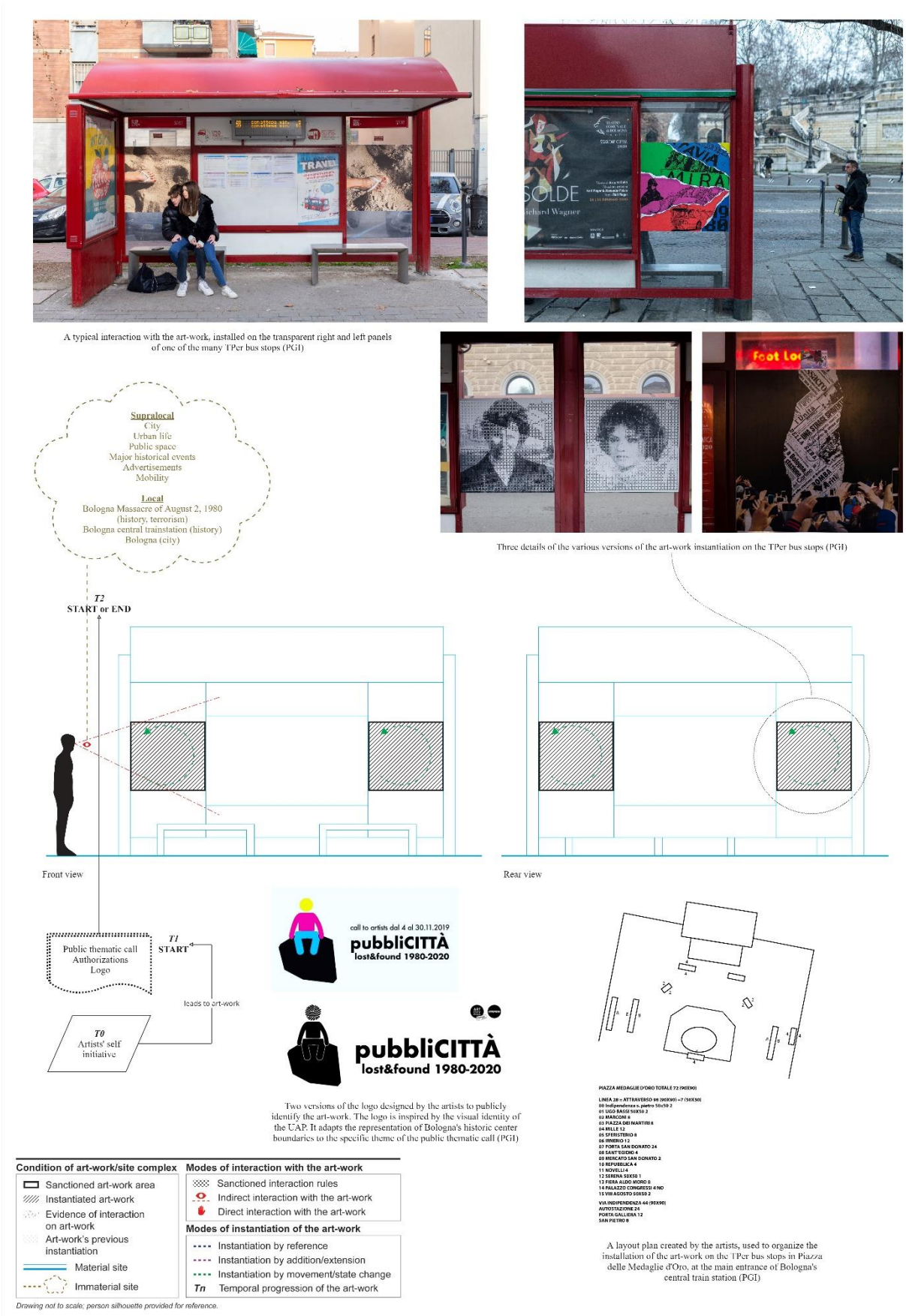
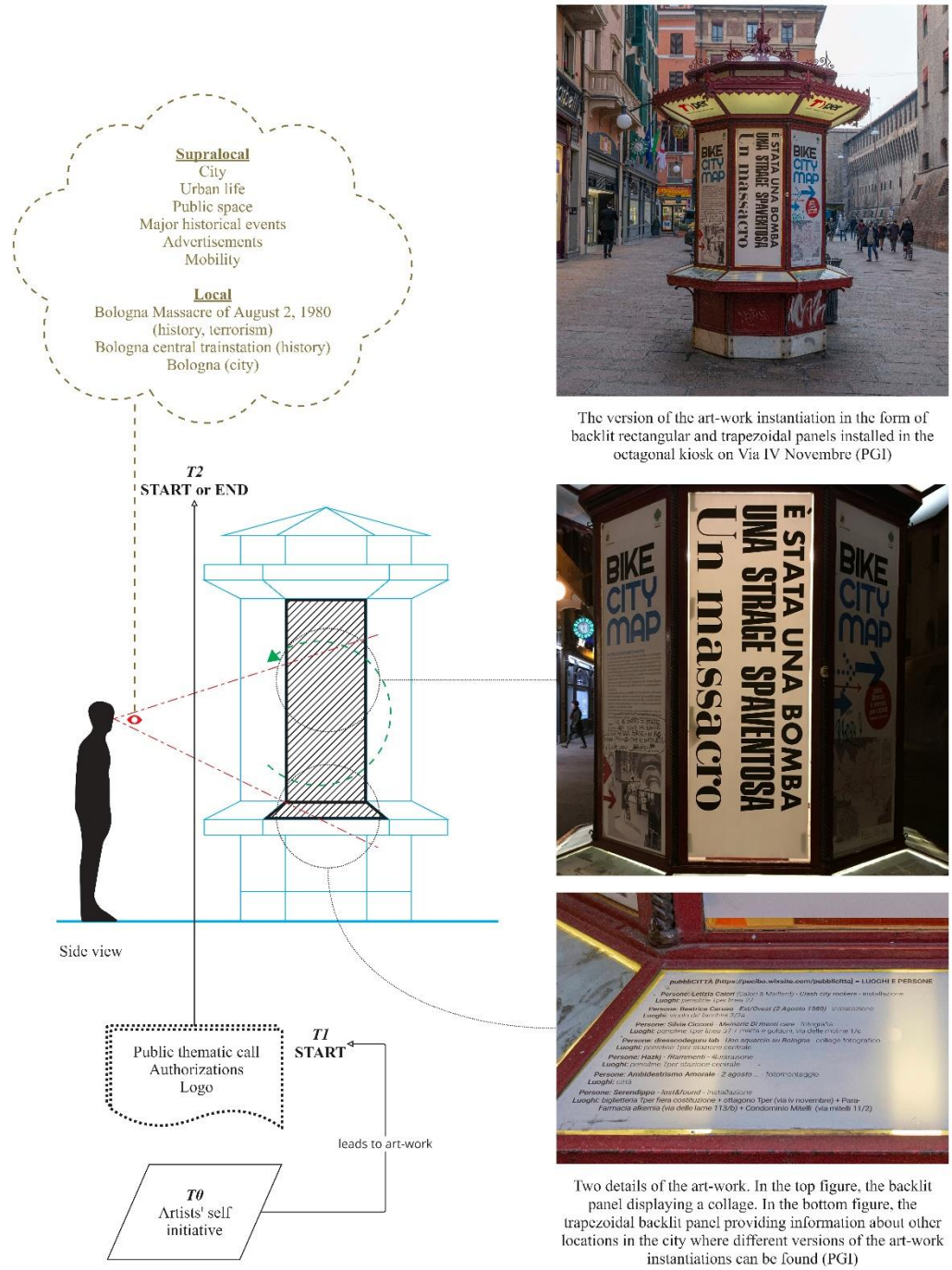


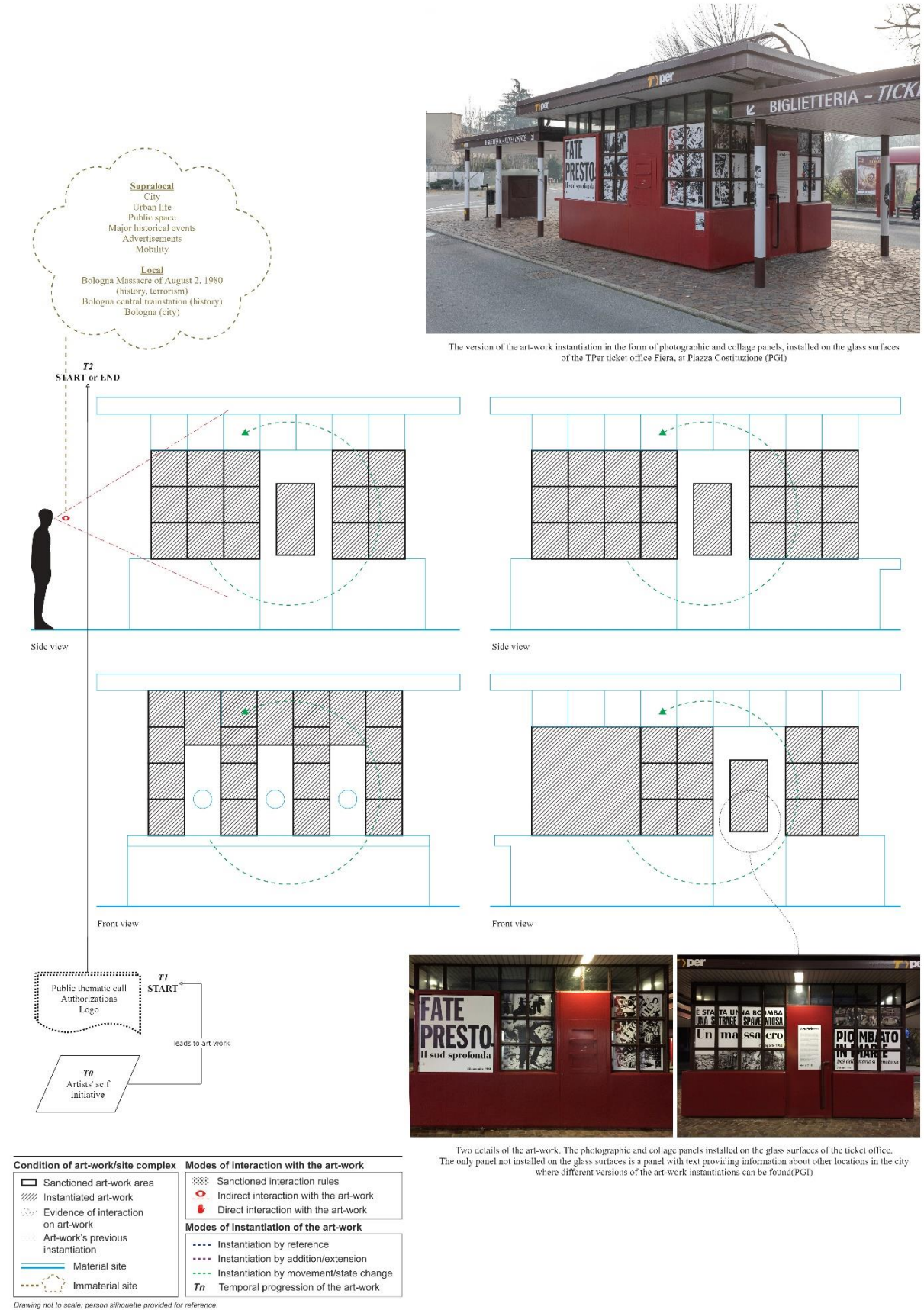
Figure 74: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the 'bus stop' form took by the instantiation 2020 of the art-work AW18BO *'PubbliCITTÀ'* rendered via process flow diagrams. (High definition diagram in Appendix I).



The version of the art-work instantiation in the form of backlit rectangular and trapezoidal panels installed in the octagonal kiosk on Via IV Novembre (PG1)

Two details of the art-work. In the top figure, the backlit panel displaying a collage. In the bottom figure, the trapezoidal backlit panel providing information about other locations in the city where different versions of the art-work instantiations can be found (PG1)

Figure 75: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the 'octagonal kiosk' form took by the instantiation 2020 of the art-work AW18BO *'PubbliCITTÀ'* rendered via process flow diagrams. (High definition diagram in Appendix L).



The version of the art-work instantiation in the form of photographic and collage panels, installed on the glass surfaces of the TPer ticket office Fiera, at Piazza Costituzione (PGI)

Two details of the art-work. The photographic and collage panels installed on the glass surfaces of the ticket office. The only panel not installed on the glass surfaces is a panel with text providing information about other locations in the city where different versions of the art-work instantiations can be found(PGI)

Figure 76: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the 'ticket office' form took by the instantiation 2020 of the art-work AW18BO *'PubbliCITTÀ'* rendered via process flow diagrams. (High definition diagram in Appendix M).

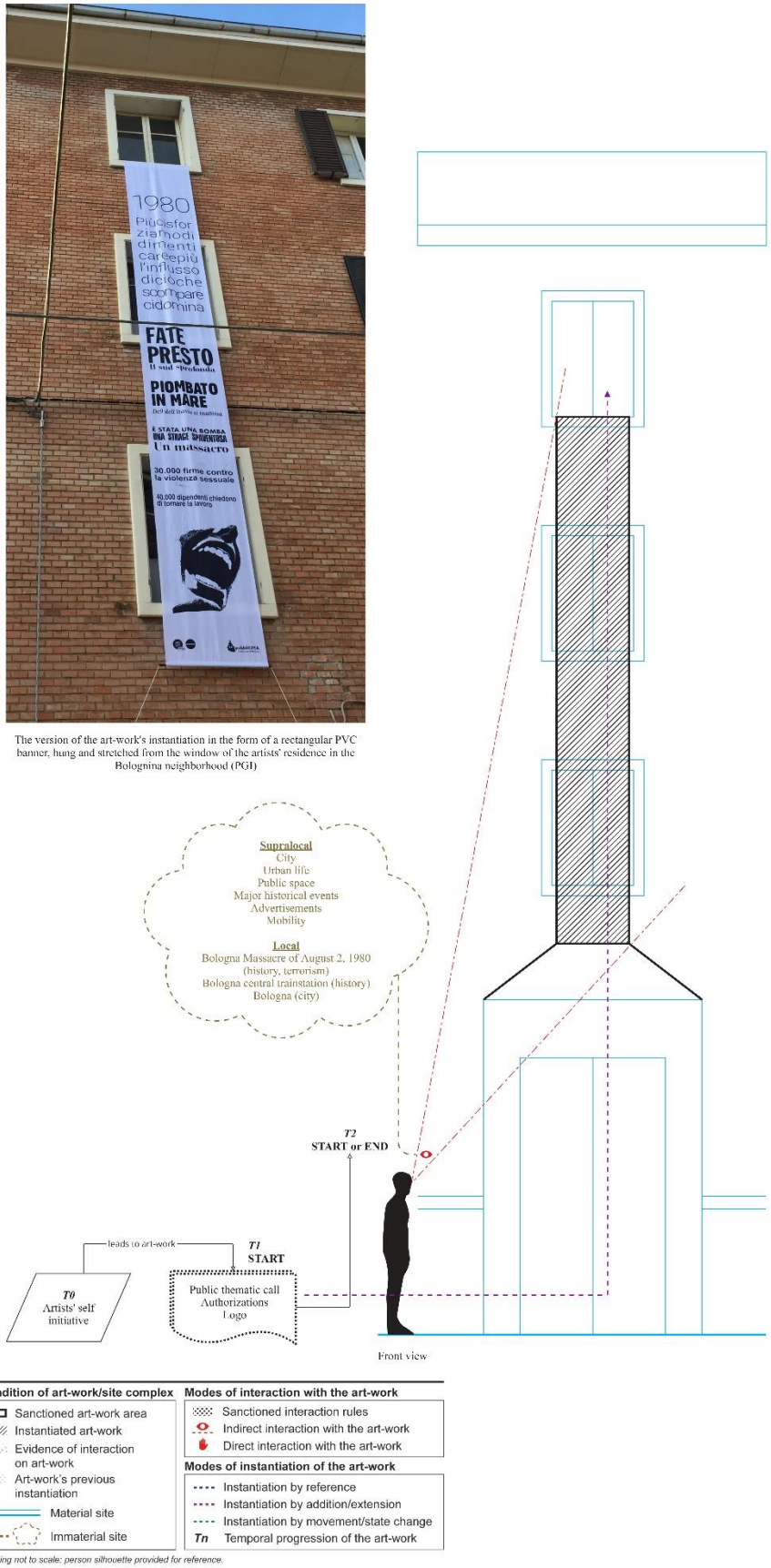


Figure 77: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the 'banner' form took by the instantiation 2020 of the art-work AW18BO *'PubbliCITTÀ'* rendered via process flow diagrams. (High definition diagram in Appendix N).

The art-work AW18BO – *'PubbliCITTÀ'* began (T0) with its first instantiation, as a self-initiated piece by the artists in 2017. Initially, the art-work existed under the name *'Fermata Obbligatoria,'* which served as a sort of prototype. This prototype was later transformed into *'PubbliCITTÀ'* starting in 2018, the year when the first instantiation under this new name took place. The artists explained:

> "It was called *'Fermata Obbligatoria'* because we did the first intervention on this beautiful structure that no longer exists… a former ticket booth at the corner of Via Lame and Via Marconi… And we did the same intervention during Cosmoprof, but on the ticket booth at the Fiera (fair), in Piazza Costituzione… Because the ticket booths were twins… there were these two beautiful metal ticket booths, with all these square glass windows… Now the one on Via Lame has been demolished to replace it with something awful… The one in Piazza Costituzione is still there. In fact, we continue to do interventions on that one." (10BO AC)

As mentioned in the introduction, as of 2024, there have been five instantiations of this work – six if including *'Fermata Obbligatoria.'* However, the ones I analyzed and present here are: the 2020 instantiation, named by the artists *'Lost & Found 1980-2020;'* and the 2024 instantiation, initially called *'Over'* and later *'Lavori in Corso'* or *'WIP.'*

The process that led to the conception of the 2020 instantiation of this art-work was reconstructed by the artists in a somewhat fragmented manner during our conversations, where they focused more on the general idea behind the piece. On the UAP's website, the idea behind the art-work is described as follows:

> "<pubbliCITTÀ> is the result of a process initiated by Serendippo in 2008, which allowed us to establish a capillary relationship between contemporary art and the city, between the city and its citizens, between public and private spaces, between exterior and interior. <pubbliCITTÀ> tells the story of our encounter with the urban dimension, with those who live in it, with those who actively participate in political life, with those who, by passing through, continually transform its identity. [...] <pubbliCITTÀ> represents a further reflection on the complex and essential relationship between the city and its identity: two corporeal, collective, material, and abstract entities. Serendippo's work manifests itself in active interventions in the city, using ideas to project into the space the needs, desires, and aspirations of those who live in it. Serendippo uses art as an instrument of approach: art that not only enhances public space but dialogues with it, questions it, establishing a tangible relationship with its inhabitants. A relationship that, if it cannot be considered entirely peaceful, can in no way be defined as sterile." (from the page dedicated to the art-work on the artists' website)

However, similar to the art-work AW17BO – *'Disegnare Dialoghi,'* the artists produced numerous end-of-work reports and frequently publicized the work through their digital channels, particularly on social networks. In a press release dated January 2020, derived from a previously drafted report, the artists describe the instantiation as follows:

> "<pubbliCITTÀ_lost&found> is a journey that crosses streets, squares, and Bolognese interiors, both public and private. [...] The theme of <pubbliCITTÀ> 2020 is the events that occurred in 1980 in Italy and their role in building a collective historical memory. [...] 1980 was a particularly complex year for Italy: it marked the beginning of a profound political, economic, social, and cultural transformation. The Fiat crisis in Turin, the closure of the Stock Exchange in Milan, the devaluation of the lira, terrorism, the Bologna massacre of August 2, Mafia and Masonic infiltrations in the State, the birth of commercial television, the Irpinia earthquake, the founding of Legambiente, the launch of the National Health Service, the birth of the first independent record labels, and the presentation of a popular initiative bill against sexual violence." (from the press release dated January 13, 2020)

Building on these intentions, the artists created and implemented three fundamental instruments for the work: the 'public thematic call,' the 'logo,' and the 'authorizations.' These essential elements became integral to the art-work's media profile, characterizing it – similar to AW17BO – as a distinctly programmatic and, in this case, 'weakly' participatory work. It is defined as 'weakly' participatory because, unlike AW17BO, this art-work did not require the direct interaction of external participants (e.g., asylum seekers) as a necessary condition for completing its instantiation. Notably, the 'collaboration agreement' instrument is absent from this art-work. However, formal collaborations did emerge with two cultural entities in Bologna: the ArtCity festival, during which new instantiations of the art-work were produced each year, and the local public transport company TPer. These collaborations contributed to the work's overall structure and impact, though without necessitating broad external participation for its realization.

It is important to emphasize that the three instruments mentioned – the 'public thematic call,' the 'logo,' and the 'authorizations' – were already present starting from the 2018 instantiation and had been previously tested through *'Fermata Obbligatoria.'* Thus, they represent a re-specification of these instruments, which occurs for each instantiation of the art-work based on the theme sanctioned by the artists.

The 'public thematic call' took the form of a written document in which the artists issued a public invitation to local artists aged eighteen to forty, running from November 4 to 30, 2019. In this call, the artists invited participants to propose photographs, illustrations, or other visual works that responded to the theme of the instantiation, focusing on the memory of events that characterized the 1980s in Italy, particularly in Bologna. The winners were selected by a committee that included

the artists themselves. This public thematic call resulted in six "exhibitions"—as the artists termed them – which I will define as 'images.' These 'images' took two main forms: photography and illustration/collage.

For brevity, I will not discuss the details of each of the six selected 'images.' However, their analysis revealed references to numerous concepts that constitute the immaterial site of the art-work at both supralocal and local levels. At the supralocal level, the images reference concepts such as 'city,' 'urban life,' 'public space,' as well as 'major historical events,' and the notions of 'advertisements' and 'mobility,' which are evoked by the presence of commercial ads alongside the 'images' posted by the artists and by the intentional placement of the art-work in public mobility sites like bus stops. At the local level, the strongest reference is undoubtedly to the '*Bologna Massacre*,' which occurred at 10:25 on Saturday, August 2, 1980, at the central train station.[54] This event is closely tied to the history of the 'Bologna central train station' and, by extension, to the identity of the city of Bologna itself.

From a material standpoint, these 'images' were produced in various non-standard formats (mostly square) and in different sizes through digital printing. The selected 'images' were then installed using adhesive paper and glue on various surfaces at specific material sites of the art-work, which were chosen by the artists during the conception of the work through numerous site visits. The selected supports for this instantiation are varied and diverse in type. In this context, I have decided to analyze and present four of them.

The first and most recurring type of support is the bus stop, managed by the local public transport company Tper. This support is located at material sites such as Piazza delle Medaglie d'Oro, in front of Bologna's Central Train Station, and along bus lines 27 and 28, which traverse Bologna's historic center, connecting it to peripheral areas like Corticella, Bolognina, Savena, and the Fiera area. Specifically, the artists utilized the rectangular polycarbonate side panels of the bus stops, which are typically reserved for commercial advertisements.

The second type of support is the octagonal kiosk, also managed by Tper as an information point, located on Via IV Novembre, a side street off Piazza Maggiore. For this support, the artists utilized two rectangular backlit glass panels, as well as two additional trapezoidal backlit glass panels.

The third type of support is the Tper ticket booth pavilion located in Piazza Costituzione, in the Fiera area. Here, the artists used the square glass windows on all four sides of the pavilion, along with some non-glass portions of the structure.

The fourth and final type of support is the facade of the condominium where one of the artists resides, in the Bolognina area. In this instance, the artists attached

[54] The Bologna Massacre (*Strage di Bologna*), also known as the Bologna bombing, occurred on August 2, 1980, when a bomb exploded at the central train station in Bologna, Italy. The attack killed 85 people and injured over 200, making it one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in Italian history. The bombing was attributed to far-right extremist groups, specifically the neo-fascist organization *Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari* (NAR). The massacre is a significant and tragic event in Italy's "Years of Lead," a period marked by widespread political violence.

a rectangular banner, hanging it from a third-floor window and securing it to the ground with two cables.

In parallel with the reception of proposals for the 'images' generated through the public thematic call, the artists decided to include two additional 'image' elements. The first element stems from a long-standing collaboration with a Bolognese photographer and consists of:

> "shots of walking feet, of steps that leave fleeting traces of their passage. The curatorial choice to follow the <Attraverso> photographic project [...] is because it fully represents the essence of pubbliCITTÀ: crossing, with art, public and private places, leaving traces of a personal elsewhere that can be public and political only if shared." (from the press release dated January 13, 2020). This "exhibition," titled *'Attraverso'* by the artists, was repeated in almost all instantiations of the art-work, except for the 2024 one, as I will explain later. The second 'image' element was produced by the artists themselves and consists of a collage of newspaper headlines and "images from newspapers on the events that shook Italy in 1980." (from the press release dated January 13, 2020)

Overall, the direct action of 'gluing the photograph/illustration/collage' was performed by the artists on the selected supports, manipulating these by installing the 'image' element. This action produced the complete instantiation of the art-work through the instantiation by state change. However, in the case of the 'image' banner affixed to the condominium in the Bolognina area, a different mode was adopted. In this instance, the instantiation of the art-work was fully realized through instantiation by addition, similar to what occurs in the 2024 instantiation, which I will analyze later.

Another instrument of the art-work is its 'logo,' which publicly identifies both the specific instantiation of the work and the UAP. To create it, the artists followed the same procedure used for AW17BO, beginning with the simplified representation of the geographical boundaries of Bologna's historic center, a symbol central to their artistic practice. This symbolic representation was then re-specified to align with the theme of the art-work. The logo created for the 2020 instantiation depicts a small figure sitting atop Bologna's historic center, with what appears to be a ball of yarn instead of a head. This same logo is made dynamic on the cover of the report, where a sequence of scenes shows the figure approaching, climbing, and finally sitting on the historic center. Through this imagery, the artists referenced the concept of 'appropriation' of Bologna's historic center, made possible by the presence of a 'tangle of memories' associated with a specific historical and cultural period that significantly shaped the city's identity.

Finally, the 'authorizations' instrument consisted of legal documents, such as contracts and written agreements, which sanctioned the conditions for performing specific actions on the material site. In this case, the agreements involved securing authorization from Bologna's public transport company, TPer, to

use some of the advertising spaces it manages, specifically the various types of supports previously described.

The three instruments constitute the body of rules established by the artists for the complete instantiation of the art-work through direct and indirect interaction with it. This body of rules, along with the various street supports—that is, the different areas of the art-work selected by the artists—and the eight 'image' or "exhibition" elements generated both through the public thematic call and externally to it, together and inseparably form a series of partial instantiations of the art-work, which can be identified as different versions of the same work.

The complete instantiation of *'Lost & Found 1980-2020'* took one year, spanning from January to December 2020.

Snapshot: AW18BO – 'PubbliCITTÀ' (instantiation 2024)

The 2024 instantiation of AW18BO featured a straightforward yellow sticker that the artists placed over the existing photographs at various urban sites from the previous instantiation. (Figure 78) The stickers displayed the art-work's name and an adaptation of the UAP's logo, depicting the boundaries of Bologna's historic center. This design choice aligned with the chosen theme for that year's instantiation, continuing the tradition established by the artists.



Figure 78: One form of the instantiation 2024 of the art-work AW18BO '*PubbliCITTÀ*' and its site, the TPer bus stops at Bologna Central Train Station. February 2024. The sticker depicts the boundaries of the historic center of Bologna, reprised from the logo of the UAP and adapted to the specific theme of the art-work's instantiation. Photo: own work (RGI).

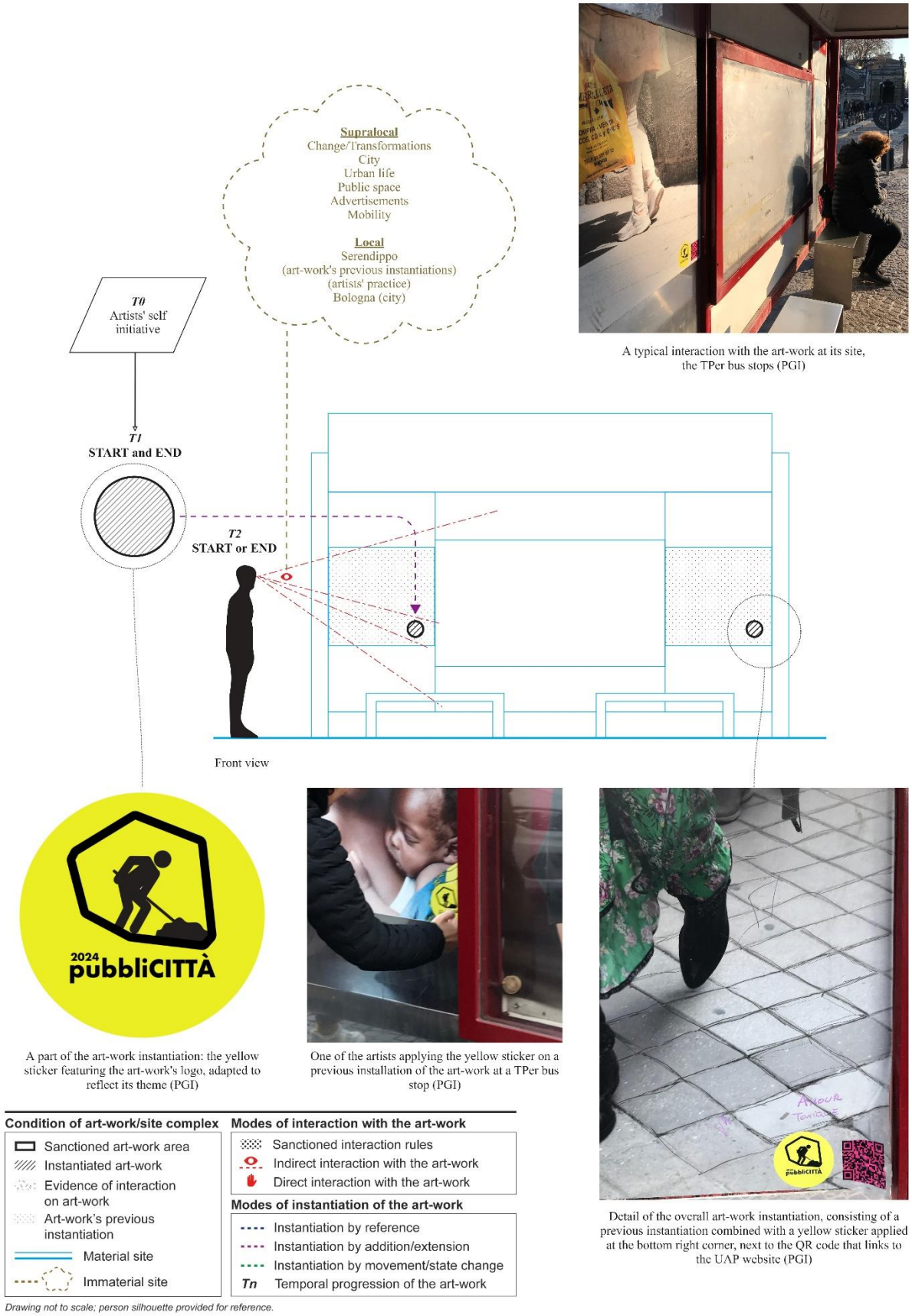


Figure 79: Visuo-textual results of SVTA analysis of the instantiation 2024 of the art-work AW18BO *'PubbliCITTÀ'* rendered via a process flow diagram. (High definition diagram in Appendix O).

The second instantiation of the art-work AW18BO – *'PubbliCITTÀ'* took place in 2024, initiated by the artists themselves (T0). Similar to the second instantiation of AW17BO – *'Disegnare Dialoghi,'* the artists stated that *'PubbliCITTÀ'* 2024 should be understood as a natural continuation of the art-work. However, almost none of the elements from the 2020 instantiation (or from other instantiations not considered in this analysis) were repeated in the 2024 instantiation. This marks an interesting and critical departure from the artists' long-established creative practice.

The artists' accounts regarding this instantiation of the work are sparse, fragmented, and lack significant detail, making it impossible to reconstruct a coherent ideation process for this particular instance. However, it is clear that, as with almost all other instantiations of the art-work, the beginning coincided with ArtCity. On this occasion, however, the work conceived by the artists was a declared critical gesture against both the cultural and urban policies of the local government, particularly criticizing the lack of attention given to public art in Bologna and, more broadly, the lack of public funding dedicated to promoting, creating, and supporting such art. In a post published on the UAP's social networks on February 3, 2024, they stated:

> "This year, Serendippo will not exhibit any work in the places that have been, for years, designated for the *pubbliCITTÀ* art path. The decision stems from a reflection on art, public space, and, above all, the role of the images that are exhibited. In a historical moment when cultural, artistic, and creative work suffers more than any other from precariousness, the lack of policies to support work and production, holding an exhibition whose cost is higher than what a young artist could earn in months of work renders the exhibition itself and any message mediated by the images 'imposed' on the public meaningless. Not exhibiting is our way of rejecting art understood only as business, communication, and marketing. Not exhibiting means trying to draw attention to cultural work rather than to the market."

With these intentions, the artists decided not to initiate the well-established design process used for previous instantiations, which typically involved planning and implementing the complex body of rules formed by the instruments 'public thematic call' and 'authorizations.' By foregoing these fundamental components of the art-work's media profile, the other essential component of its partial instantiation – namely the 'images' or "exhibitions," the photographic or illustrative proposals that would have been installed on various street supports gathered through the public thematic call – was also absent.

Instead, the artists decided that *'PubbliCITTÀ'* 2024

> "will consist of a mass of stickers… because prices have become so high […] Yellow signs… and they will be on all the bus stops layered over our

> previous projects […] The color will be yellow, and we will tell the story of why 'works in progress' with an edition ready." (09BO ACR)

With this choice, the artists established a new character for the art-work, opting for a distinctly subversive dimension over the previously programmatic one.

In this specific case, the essential element 'image' takes the form of a round yellow sticker. This sticker features the UAP's 'logo,' re-specified to align with the instantiation's theme and drawn in black. The logo depicts the same figure from the first instantiation of the art-work, now engaged in digging a mound of earth within the outline of Bologna's historic center, referencing the road sign conventionally indicating 'works in progress.' This reference is further reinforced by the use of the black-and-yellow color palette, which generally evokes the concept of 'transformations,' a theme integral to the art-work's immaterial site at the supralocal level. The round sticker, on its own, represents a partial instantiation of the art-work, as it defines the boundaries of the art-work's area as sanctioned by the artists.

For this instantiation, no direct interaction with the art-work was planned beyond the action of 'affixing the sticker' to various supports. In this instance, the supports are the previous instantiations of the work at some of the material sites previously used for *'Lost & Found 1980-2020,'* including bus stops, the octagonal kiosk, and the TPer ticket booth. The artists carried out the action of applying the stickers independently over a single afternoon in February 2024. This action alone resulted in a complete instantiation of the art-work, realized exclusively through the mode of instantiation by addition, without involving a state change, as was the case in previous instantiations of the work. However, there remains a significant component of indirect interaction with the work, occurring through the simple act of encountering it – whether by chance or intentionally – and becoming aware of the sticker's presence over the previous 'images' of *'PubbliCITTÀ'*.

Chapter 5 – Discussion and conclusion

"*Artworks in and as a variety of practices* should, it is hoped, *provide a program of research* that could fruitfully be taken up by researchers, artists, and art professionals." (Kreplak, 2018, p.160, emphasis added)

"Stop talking about science! Go to a laboratory – any laboratory will do – hang around for a while, listen to conversations, watch the technicians work, ask them to explain what they do, read their notes, observe what they say when they examine data, and watch how they move equipment around! […] Although such an experience can raise innumerable doubts about how a social scientist can hope to identify, let alone to explain, what goes on in the thickness of the technical routines of another discipline, it should be sufficient to answer the question, "Do you see anything other than *bricolage*, ordinary discourse and situated actions?" (Lynch, 1993, p.315, emphasis in original)

Introduction and chapter outline

In this final chapter, I discuss the visual-textual results presented in Chapter 4. The chapter is divided into two main sections.

In Section 5.1, I systematically discuss the findings from the iterative visual-textual analysis of the three UAP case studies: *Antonello Ghezzi*, *This Is So Temporary*, and *Serendippo*. My discussion consists of an interpretive analysis of the process diagrams reconstructed in Sections 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 for the seven art-works analyzed. Case after case, I review and examine the varying degrees of interdependence between each art-work and its respective urban site(s) in Bologna, also noting key areas of convergence and divergence that emerge across these studies.

In Section 5.2 and its subsections, I provide concise conclusions to the study, addressing the research questions, evaluating the achievement of its aims, and considering its limitations, particularly methodological ones. The chapter closes with some reflections on the potential contributions of the study, offering perspectives for future research and exploring the practical-applicative implications of the findings.

5.1 Discussion

In this section, I discuss the results of the overall iterative visual-textual analysis that I conducted on the three UAPs in Bologna: 01BO – *Antonello Ghezzi*, 04BO – *This Is So Temporary*, and 06BO – *Serendippo*. Given the fundamentally descriptive and heterogeneous nature of the findings obtained from my studies, I chose to structure the discussion as a review of each of the seven art-works produced by these three artistic practices. I analyzed the art-works one by one in

their various instantiations, and focused particularly on an *interpretive* and *systematic* reading of the visual-textual thick descriptions (see Chapter 4, Sections 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4) that reconstruct the art-works through process diagrams. My aim has been to *interpret, conceptualize,* and then *synthesize* the different modes of instantiation of each art-work studied, aiming to highlight, delimit, and reflect on the specific *quality of the interdependence* emerging between these art-works (considered here as site-specific creative processes, as I have argued elsewhere in this dissertation) and their urban sites in Bologna. Simultaneously, I have tied this discussion to the three 'logics' of urban artistic practice that emerged from the three case studies: *Interactive objects*, *Devices*, and *Programs*. In discussing the results, I have maintained continuity with the theoretical framework (outlined in Chapter 2), basing my interpretations and arguments on its fundamental concepts regarding the internal complexity of the art-works studied. I have done this while attempting to triangulate and reconnect each conceptualization to the actual words spoken and images produced by the artists.

In Subsection 5.1.1, I discuss the art-works of the duo *Antonello Ghezzi*, AW01BO – *'Io e Te',* and AW02BO – *'La Palazzina dei Sogni'*, both created through the site of the Palazzina Liberty at Giardini Margherita in the historic center of Bologna. These *interactive objects* establish an interdependence materialized as a dialogue with the local urban site, incorporating physical elements and supralocal immaterial dimensions linked to human relationships in public space.

In Subsection 5.1.2, I focus on the collective *This Is So Temporary* and their art-works AW11BO – *'Farò'*, AW12BO – *'Anti-monument - A Living Unit'*, and AW13BO – *'Anti-monument – Temporary but Resistant'*. These artistic *devices* operate through public participation, an interaction between aesthetics and politics, and social critique. In particular, through its two instantiations, *'Farò'* alters its interdependence with the site, evolving from a visual landmark into a physical-digital device that invites critical reflection on urban and environmental transformations in its specific local urban site, the territory of Rastignano and the Savena creek. The *'Anti-monuments'*, on the other hand, challenge the traditional conception of the monument, requiring direct and contextualized public interaction, thus questioning the conventionally understood notions of commemoration and monumentality in urban space through public use and the continuous mobility of the monumental device-object.

In Subsection 5.1.3, I examine the artistic *programs* of the association *Serendippo* through the art-works AW17BO – *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* and AW18BO – *'PubbliCITTÀ'*, two works that are fundamentally programmatic and composite in nature, fully integrating their respective urban sites and actively engaging local communities through the creation and implementation of immaterial participatory instruments such as flyers, public thematic calls, and collaboration agreements. Through these long-standing art-works, across their multiple instantiations, this UAP establishes a profound interdependence with the ongoing urban transformations in Bologna and with the city as a whole, promoting a 'practical' and participatory reflection on the social tensions related to such changes.

Finally, through this discussion, I also aim to 'stitch back together' the specific direction of the bidirectional interaction between art and city explored through this research – namely, the influence of the city's transformation on the artists' practice – with its 'counterpart': the impact that artistic practice has on the transformation of the city. By discussing the interdependence between the art-work and the site, it has been possible to propose some comprehensive arguments on the particular phenomenology of a certain way of making a certain kind of art. Or, in other words, to demonstrate a deeper understanding of how a specific creative process carried out by artists in a particular site in Bologna is shaped and constituted through that site, and, simultaneously, how that same urban site is transformed through the artistic process itself.

5.1.1 Discussion of case study 01BO – *Antonello Ghezzi*

AW01BO – 'Io e Te' (instantiation 2016)

The results of the visuo-textual analysis of the urban art-work AW01BO – '*Io e Te'* clearly demonstrate how the relationship between the urban site – the Palazzina Liberty building in Giardini Margherita, located in the Santo Stefano district of Bologna – and the art-work manifests through deeply interwoven layers, involving diverse interdependencies among physical, historical, and social elements. Through these interconnected dimensions, a relationship forms that can be interpreted as a continuous '*dialogue*' between the art-work and the specific urban site. This characterizes the art-work's instantiation, produced by the UAP *Antonello Ghezzi*, as an *interactive object*. I believe this dialogue can be examined from at least three perspectives: the focus on the materiality of the site, the historical memory associated with it, and the social and immaterial interactions that the art-work generates and facilitates.

The first level of interdependence between the art-work and the site involves the material and tangible aspects of the art-work and its physical placement at the site. On this point, I argue that the artists' decision to position the elements of the art-work across Piazzale Mario Jacchia, facing the Palazzina Liberty, with each element oriented toward the building's façade, is not coincidental but heavily influenced by the location of the artists' studio inside the building. In this way, the architecture of the Palazzina, along with the scaffolding surrounding it due to restoration work, becomes an integral part of the urban site incorporated into the art-work. The artists' choice to use materials directly related to the construction site, such as yellow melamine-coated spruce wood planks commonly used for scaffolding, directly references the site's transformation—first material (the building's walls under renovation) and later immaterial (the potential future change in the building's purpose). This artists' tacit intention to integrate temporary structures and construction materials as part of the art-work's medial profile highlights the material dynamics of the site's transformation, which the art-work itself embodies.

A second fundamental level of interdependence between AW01BO and the local urban site involves the recovery of historic streetlamp hats from Giardini Margherita. These objects, which had illuminated the park for decades, were salvaged by the artists when they were replaced by modern LED lamps. I argue that this choice is not merely (or exclusively) an appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of the reclaimed objects, but rather a deliberate act of both preserving and re-imagining the site's history. The direct reference of these artifacts to the park's streetlamps, and their integration into the art-work, positions them as 'witnesses' to the time and social interactions that occurred under their light. Through this reference, the art-work establishes a dialogue with the specific urban site. In the art-work, the streetlamp hats take on a new 'life', while maintaining continuity with their original function – illuminating, in this case, by becoming 'containers' of a light that activate only through human interaction. The recovery of these objects represents not only the preservation of physical items but also the recovery of local collective memory. The art-work creates a bridge between the past and present of the broader local urban site, encouraging those who interact with it to reflect on the space in terms of its changes over time. The reuse of objects from the local urban site is a recurring practice in the work of many other UAPs I encountered in this study, including UAP 04BO *This Is So Temporary*, which I will address in the next subsection. Naturally, there are multiple reasons for reclaiming and reusing 'waste' materials, but in the specific cases explored here, I argue that this creative approach is likely tied to the recurring theme of limited financial resources (the so-called 'budget') and the inadequate funding for culture and the production of public art, as many interviewed artists have lamented. In this sense, the artists of UAP *Antonello Ghezzi* repeatedly emphasized how the budget becomes both an actual constraint and thus creative design generator for many of their art-works.

A third level of interdependence between the art-work and the urban site concerns the social interaction that the art-work, as an interactive object, encourages. The installation requires the physical involvement of people, through an action that has its meaning derived specifically from that urban site. As the artists specified, the sensors placed on the yellow pedestals – and thus the light bulbs contained in the streetlamp hats mounted on the scaffolding of the Palazzina – only activate when two people join hands, emphasizing the importance of human connection and collaboration to generate energy and light. This dynamic prompts reflection on public space at large as a place for connection and interaction, yet managing to establish a direct relationship between the art-work and the function of Giardini Margherita, tied to the 'life' of the urban site on an immaterial level. In addition to being materially integrated into the art-work in the ways I have previously discussed, the site works as an active component of its functioning. When people participate in interacting with the art-work, they temporarily alter the urban site, making it an observable and experienced part of the art-work itself. By turning on the lights installed on the Palazzina Liberty through a social practical action in a specific location (i.e., at the Giardini Margherita, facing the scaffolded Palazzina) using a particular interactive object as the 'mediator' (the art-work), the

site transforms from one state to another: the Palazzina's façade (and thus, the building itself) shift from being 'unlit' to 'lit', or from 'invisible' to 'visible'. In keeping with this interpretative line, it is also important to note that the artists repeatedly emphasized the significance of collaboration during the creation of the art-work, which mirrors the interaction required of the public to activate the lights. In this sense, it can be argued that the interactivity of the art-work promotes a reflection on the value of human relationships in the context of urban life more broadly understood, in this case at a supralocal level – extending beyond Bologna, as the artists themselves stated. The physical connection between people, holding hands in a specific place and witnessing a light turn on as a direct result of that social practical action, serves as an enacted metaphor for the social dynamics that sustain and transform public spaces daily.

Building on these reflections, and with reference to the visuo-textual findings presented in Subsection 4.2.1, I argue that it is possible to conceptualize two primary modes of instantiation for the art-work AW01BO – *'Io e Te'*. These two modes are:

1. Instantiation by Reference:
    - *At time T1*: The A4 sheet containing the interaction rules refers, on one hand, to the outline of the open hand drawn on the top panel of each pedestal, which in turn directs the participant to the specific action to be performed on the sensor located at the center of the outline ('placing one hand'). On the other hand, the sheet also refers to the direct action to be performed with another participant ('holding hands').
    - *At time T2*: Once illuminated, the light within the streetlamp's hats refers, on one hand, to the immaterial conception that a participant may form of the site in relation to the interaction just completed with the art-work. For the art-work AW01BO, this immaterial site is manifested, as sanctioned by the artists, on both a supralocal level (the abstract idea of 'the other;' the notion of 'relationships' and 'togetherness') and a local level (the history of 'Giardini Margherita,' symbolized by the old streetlamp hats, as well as the Palazzina Liberty and its future after the restoration work; and the connection with the broader context of the city of Bologna). On the other hand, the illuminated light also refers back to the A4 sheet, thereby completing the instantiation of the art-work.

2. Instantiation by State Change:
    - *At time T2*: The art-work is fully instantiated at the moment when the bulb inside the streetlamp's hat temporarily shifts from the 'off' state to the 'on' state, triggered by the closing of an electrical circuit. This state change also serves as evidence of the public's direct interaction with the art-work.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the art-work existed as a single instantiation, with no plans by the artists to create new or derivative versions. As a result, there is no prior version of the art-work, and it is not possible to definitively comment on the creation of future derivative instantiations, whether at the same site or elsewhere. However, the unique interdependence between the performative and interactive aspects of the art-work, the physical materials used (particularly the wooden planks), and the material properties of the site (especially the steel scaffolding on the façade of the Palazzina), suggests that any future instantiations would require significant reformulation of its medial profile. This would be necessary whether the art-work was reimagined in a different site or even in its original location. For example, the scaffolding might no longer exist, or some of the streetlamp hats could have been lost or destroyed.

AW02BO – 'La Palazzina dei Sogni' (instantiation 2024)

As with the art-work AW01BO, the results of the visual-textual analysis of the urban art-work AW02BO – '*La Palazzina dei Sogni'* demonstrate the specific interdependence between the urban site – once again, the architecture of the Palazzina Liberty in Giardini Margherita, located in the Santo Stefano district of Bologna – and the art-work itself. The unique aspect of this analysis, compared to all other art-works studied, lies in the fact that AW02BO has not yet physically materialized (as of fall 2024) and currently exists only as a concept. I have argued that this particular condition represents a partial instantiation of the art-work, and that a complete instantiation is possible, as it has been validated by the artists through their articulation of the art-work's 'functioning'. I believe that this functioning – which basically means 'how it should happen' – is central to understanding the interdependence between the art-work and its urban site, requiring consideration of both the speculative dynamics of immaterial and material relationships between the partial instantiation and the Palazzina Liberty. There are numerous points of both continuity and discontinuity between the two art-works, AW02BO and AW01BO.

On a material level, the architecture of the Palazzina, covered by the temporary steel scaffolding, is understood by the artists as concrete, tangible evidence of the ongoing transformation of this specific urban site. The Palazzina has long been regarded as a "construction site" by both the artists and many local residents, according to the artists themselves. As such, the building's scaffolding has been integrated into the art-work as its primary tangible support. The decision to intervene on this structure makes the scaffolding an integral part of the art-work, similar to its role in AW01BO. Here, the scaffolding serves as the support for two previous gallery works by *Antonello Ghezzi*: a collage of starry sky prints above various cities around the world, and a light bar that illuminates when a meteorite falls over the Mediterranean. The material chosen by the artists to convey the visual features of the art-work, PVC, typically used for advertising banners, references

both the commercial nature of urban space and its transience, as it is often used to cover construction scaffolding. In this case, the PVC is reimagined as a medium for artistic expression, linking the specific site of the Palazzina to a supralocal concept – the 'universe' – thereby inviting broader reflection on the idea of 'humanity under the same sky'. The starry sky prints covering the scaffolding go beyond simple decoration. While beautification of the Palazzina's current state is one (yet not the only) intention declared by the artists, the prints act as an interface that both conceals and reveals the building's 'incompleteness'. This dual function suggests that the artwork seeks to re-signify temporary elements of the site, such as the long-standing scaffolding, transforming what is often seen pessimistically as unchanging into symbols of opportunity and transformation. Indeed, by integrating these elements and their specific perception into the art-work, the scaffolding itself becomes a metaphor for change. Additionally, the inclusion of the intermittent light bar provides another point of continuity with AW01BO and reflects a recurring creative practice in *Antonello Ghezzi*'s artistic research. This light, which rhythmically turns on and off, introduces a dynamic element into a site that is otherwise perceived as static, altering the appearance of the façade and creating a link to a global – or even universal – context. In contrast, the surrounding context of the Palazzina, including Giardini Margherita and the Santo Stefano district, is only weakly integrated into the art-work.

Moving on to the immaterial level, the relationship between the art-work and the site is equally significant. The collage of starry skies, which were seemingly chosen at random, represents a conceptual and symbolic connection, i.e., an indirect reference, between Bologna and other cities around the world. The use of the 'sky' as the central subject, rather than the direct representation of specific cities, offers a shift in interpretation: the art-work invites the public, who in this case encounter the interactive object, to reflect beyond the physical and geographical boundaries of Bologna. The cities chosen by the artists for the collage, or rather the skies above those cities, are thus configured as representations of shared human experiences, of diverse communities looking up at the same sky. In this sense, the art-work expands the meaning of the site, transforming it from a geographically specific location (the Palazzina Liberty at the Giardini Margherita) into a platform for universal reflection on human relationships. This aspect becomes particularly evident, for example, with the inclusion of cities like Damascus, Kabul, and Jerusalem – cities associated with conflict or significant historical events. By featuring these cities, the art-work subtly introduces a political reflection, turning the collage into an immaterial representation of connection between different urban realities, or, more broadly, between different people. The sky above Bologna, however, is deliberately excluded by the artists, emphasizing the fact that the city is already 'under its own sky', and that the artistic intervention aims to establish a dialogue between Bologna and the rest of the world. In this regard, I believe that an interesting aspect of the art-work lies in the relationship between the actual material sky and the represented sky. The artists have stated that the sky above Bologna was not included because "you just have to look up". This assertion highlights the direct link between the

physical site and the natural context surrounding it, where here 'natural' is to be understood as 'naturalistic'. In this way, the real sky above the Palazzina Liberty (and above Bologna) becomes part of the art-work, requiring the viewer to engage with the duality between what is represented (the possible or imagined) and what is real (the actual, material conditions in which the interaction takes place). As I have argued, compared to AW01BO, the public interaction with AW02BO is in this case indirect. The art-work does not require active physical involvement. Indeed, the intermittent light bar and the collage of starry skies are elements that engage the subject interacting with the art-work on a visual and symbolic, rather than physical, level. Nevertheless, the art-work solicits a form of imaginative participation. In other words, through a soft play of *make-believe*, the art-work invites the emergence of an 'awareness' of the site, by looking 'beyond' the art-work itself and, consequently, beyond the current condition of the site – which means, 'beyond' the presence of the scaffolding around the Palazzina, not so much to imagine the building without it (which, of course, is still possible) but to re-signify its presence. In this sense, the art-work integrates indirect public interaction, albeit weakly.

Building on this discussion, and with reference to the visual-textual findings presented in Subsection 4.2.1, I argue that it is possible to conceptualize two modes of instantiation for the art-work AW02BO – *'La Palazzina dei Sogni'*, one relating exclusively to the partial instantiation of the art-work, and one relating to the (as of now possible, but not certain) complete instantiation of the art-work.

The mode of partial instantiation is the Instantiation by Reference:

- *At time T1*: The art-work as 'concept' encompasses the entire scaffolding surrounding the Palazzina Liberty, located in Giardini Margherita in the city of Bologna—three elements that together form both the material and immaterial site of the art-work. In this context, the 'history' of the Palazzina – its transformation observable by the presence of the scaffolding surrounding it – is evoked through indirect interaction with the art-work itself. The Palazzina, in turn, refers to the artists' studio, which is situated inside of it. This reference extends to the UAP and its entire artistic output, as the artists have integrated two previous art-works into this piece, which they regard as "principal" and thus representative of their overall artistic production. The connection to the artists' complete body of work, which takes place specifically within the Palazzina surrounded by the scaffolding, is deeply tied to their 'history' at that site and links to the three recurring themes in UAP's artistic research: 'sky,' 'universe,' and 'relationship'. These themes represent the supralocal level of the immaterial site.

The complete (currently speculative) instantiation I have outlined in the process diagram in Subsection 4.2.1, integrates the mode of partial instantiation described above with the mode of Instantiation by State Change:

- *At time T2*: The art-work is fully instantiated when the LED strip within the light bar installed on the scaffolding temporarily shifts from the 'off' to the

'on' state in response to input received from the Bologna Medicina Radio Telescope as a meteor passes over the Mediterranean. However, this state change does not represent evidence of direct interaction with the art-work, as direct interaction with the public has not been sanctioned as a significant feature of the piece and, therefore, does not form part of its media profile.

Finally, like art-work AW01BO, art-work AW02BO also existed in a single instantiation. The artists did not foresee the possibility of creating new instantiations. Additionally, to date, the two gallery works that compose the art-work have never been used together to produce new projects. Consequently, no previous instantiation of the art-work has emerged.

5.1.2 Discussion of case study 04BO – *This Is So Temporary*

AW11BO – 'Farò' (instantiations 2023 and 2024)

From the results of the visual-textual analysis of the art-work AW11BO – '*Farò'*, produced by the UAP *This Is So Temporary*, several key dynamics emerge, highlighting the complex interdependence between the art-work and its urban site. This relationship evolves over time through the two instantiations of the art-work that I analyzed, revealing a tension between visibility, interaction, and participation. This tension, unique to this UAP's work, emerges through both a tangible and a digital dimensions, distinguishing AW11BO from the productions of the other two UAPs studied, and characterizing it as an artistic device. The art-work unfolds in two distinct instantiations, dated January 2023 and January 2024, respectively. While both share the same overarching vision, they employ different approaches to engaging with the urban site and the public. In its first instantiation, '*Farò'* appears as a symbolic and visual operation, rooted in a conceptual and generic, or supralocal, interpretation of the urban site – the industrial warehouse in Rastignano, which serves as the UAP's base. In contrast, the second instantiation evolves into a performative and participatory work, centered around the transforming local context, specifically the stretch of the Savena creek that runs through Rastignano. This evolution marks a significant shift in the art-work's approach, moving from symbolic representation to concrete public engagement, from visibility to participation, and from focusing on a singular landmark-object to a multisensory integration with the surrounding territory.

In the first instantiation (2023), AW11BO presents itself as a work composed of two key elements: a metal column and a self-published magazine. The art-work, as a whole, functions as a collective device, where the emphasis is placed on collective artistic 'doings'. In this first instantiation, the connection between the art-work and the site is primarily symbolic and conceptual. It is expressed predominantly through the installation, the column, which serves as a visual landmark in the urban landscape of Rastignano. The metal column, installed in the courtyard in front of the UAP's studio and constructed from scrap materials, acts as

a visual statement that reflects the identity of the UAP and its artistic activity and research. While the column has a specific geographic location (the front courtyard of the industrial warehouse in Rastignano), the connection to the surrounding territory is relatively weak. The urban site, in this case, is more immaterial than material. Although the installation is physically anchored in the UAP's studio courtyard, the site reference of the art-work as a whole remains generic. The "lighthouse", while physically marking a specific location in the urban landscape of Rastignano, operates as a universal symbol critiquing traditional art institutions. It proposes an alternative model of artistic production and appreciation, one grounded in assembly, autonomy, and collective creativity. The materiality of the art-work – represented by the metal column – connects to the tangible urban site primarily through its visual presence. As a landmark, it is designed to be seen from afar, with magenta and black color schemes, painted letters referencing the name of the art-work, and additional elements like flags and light bulbs installed at its top to enhance visibility. However, this first instantiation does not require direct physical or functional interaction from the public to be fully instantiated.

The second instantiation of AW11BO (2024) marks a significant paradigm shift in the interdependence between the art-work and the urban site, making the spatial context a fundamental element for producing, understanding, and experiencing the work itself. While the first instantiation remained more conceptual and generic in its interaction with the site, this second phase is heavily rooted in the material and social context of Rastignano. It directly involves the territory and its transformation, offering a deeper reflection on the evolving urban environment. In this iteration, the art-work transforms into a multi-media device, composed of three key elements: again, the self-published magazine, a digital device utilizing augmented reality, and a walking path along the Savena creek. Here, the urban site is no longer a mere backdrop for the art-work but is fully integrated in the art-work itself, both materially and immaterially. The walking path, punctuated by mandatory stops marked with physical blocks containing QR codes, invites the public to explore the actual urban-natural territory while simultaneously comparing it with its speculative, digital counterpart, viewed through the augmented reality device. This mechanism constitutes an 'overlay' between the actual landscape and its speculative version, encouraging a dialogue between reality and its digitally constructed vision. It might be argued that this mode has parallels to the work of the UAP *Antonello Ghezzi* in AW02BO, where the Palazzina Liberty was both concealed and revealed simultaneously. In this case, the speculative spherical photos of Rastignano overlay the real, transforming landscape, allowing participants to experience both the current state of the site and (one of) its imagined future(s). The purpose of this overlay is to provoke critical reflection on the consequences of ongoing urban and environmental transformations in Rastignano, encouraging a re-signification of the site. The art-work, through augmented reality, reformulates the site and digitizes it into a dystopian vision, sparking a broader reflection on how that particular urban spaces evolves. Unlike the first instantiation of AW11BO, where public participation was more 'passive', the direct interaction

with the art-work is essential here. The artists have sanctioned structured 'rules' that require physical interaction with the material site (walking, and scanning the QR codes installed on the blocks along the path) and the digital site (the spherical photos accessible via QR codes). This interaction creates a direct relationship between the physical site and the digital art-work, integrating augmented reality into the public's perception and embodied experience of the territory. Moreover, the walking path itself is carefully plotted by the artists to address and respond to recent infrastructural and environmental changes in the area, such as the construction of the Fondovalle Savena and the aftermath of the floods.

It might be said that the comparison between the two instantiations of AW11BO – *'Farò'* highlights a clear evolution in the relationship between the work and the urban site. In the first instantiation, the site is primarily treated as a symbolic element, an abstract context in which the art-work serves as a visual and conceptual reference point. It is therefore possible to assert that the material site of Rastignano is merely included in the art-work, functioning as its backdrop, rather than being meaningfully integrated in it. The connection to the physical location is weak; the art-work signals the presence of the artists' studio without actively interacting with or addressing the surrounding territory. In this sense, the immaterial supralocal site – reflected in the critique of traditional art institutions – prevails over the material one. In the second instantiation, however, the integration of the local site into the art-work is complete. Not only is the territory of Rastignano physically integrated into the art-work, but it also becomes the subject of a critical reflection on its future, with a reference to a supralocal dimension that is more of a byproduct of this very reflection. Here, the interaction with the site through the art-work is essential for the complete instantiation of the art-work itself, and in this case, the use of digital technology creates an overlay between physical and speculative reality that exemplifies the particular interdependence between the art-work and the site. This evolution in the creative process likely reflects a greater awareness on the part of the artists in treating the urban space not only as a place to 'occupy,' but as an entity to interact with, critique, and ultimately transform through their creative work.

Based on this discussion, and with reference to the visual-textual findings presented in Subsection 4.3.1, in the overall context of its two instantiations, I argue that it is possible to conceptualize two primary modes of instantiation for the art-work AW11BO – *'Farò'*. These two modes are:

1. Instantiation by Reference:
    - For the 2023 instantiation:
        - *At time T1*: The self-published magazine makes a 'weak' reference to the art-work, evoking two key concepts that characterize the supralocal level of the immaterial site: the general concept of the 'lighthouse' and the critical idea of 'another world of contemporary art.'
        - *At time T2*: The art-work references the immaterial site on a local level through the characters painted on the left and front

sides of the column, specifically relating to TIST and its identity as a 'collective and political artistic practice working in urban space.' It also references the material site, particularly the UAP studio near where the column is installed. At both time T1 and time T2, the instantiation is complete.

- For the 2024 instantiation:
  - *At time T1*: The self-published magazine makes a 'weak' reference to the art-work as a whole, instead thematizing the key concepts that characterize the supralocal level of the immaterial site: the general concepts of 'change' and 'transformation,' exemplified by the 'environmental crisis' and 'real estate speculation.' Additionally, the magazine provides access to the web address of the digital map of the path.
  - *At time T2*: At the start of time T2, the art-work is partially instantiated. The digital map references the path itself and each of the five mandatory stops identified by the artists, as well as the magenta-colored concrete and metal blocks on which the QR codes are placed. When scanned, the QR codes reference the speculative landscapes in the spherical photos viewable on a smartphone. These, in turn, directly reference the material site, specifically the stretch of the Savena stream identified by the artists, and the local immaterial site, encapsulating the environmental disaster represented by the Savena flood, the new infrastructure under construction, and the broader radical transformations in the Emilia-Romagna region. The spherical photos, in turn, reference the digital map and the next mandatory stop, completing the instantiation at *time T3* once the final stop of the itinerary is reached.

2. <u>Instantiation by State Change</u>:
   - For the 2024 instantiation only:
     - *At time T2*: The art-work is fully instantiated when the participant accesses the spherical photo via the web address obtained through the QR code on the magenta-colored concrete and metal blocks, triggering a state change from the 'physical' (the materially existing block) to the 'digital' (the virtual spherical photo). This state change is closely linked to the mode of instantiation by reference, as it creates a connection between the material and immaterial sites.

The artists have clearly indicated their intention to continue producing new instantiations of the art-work AW11BO, though they have not specified the contexts in which these new "editions" might take place, nor whether these will manifest as mere magazines or potentially as installations.

Moreover, I contend that it is possible to conceive of each instantiation as a previous instantiation of the art-work, given that the essential element 'self-published magazine' is repeated in each "edition." This repetition ensures the continuity of the work over time and allows for its re-specification in relation to multiple sites.

AW12BO – 'Anti-monument - A Living Unit' (instantiation 2021-22)

The results of the visual-textual analysis of *AW12BO – 'Anti-monument – A Living Unit'* reveal a peculiar interdependence between the art-work and the urban site, both materially and immaterially, especially when compared to the other case studies examined. This interdependence frames the art-work as a 'nomadic' artistic device, one that actively engages with and adapts to the various sites in which it is *placed* and *used*. The interdependence between the art-work and the site centers around this placement and usage mechanism, building on the concept of the monument and monumentality, or rather, on a critique of the traditional notion of monuments, aligning the UAP's artistic research with the strand of 'counter-monumentality', which I explored in Chapter 2.

The art-work AW12BO has undergone two main phases of development, shaping both its conceptual and material evolution, as well as its relationship with the urban context. The first phase dates back to 2016 in Florence, Italy, during the academic studies of one of the UAP artists. During this period, the concept of the '*Anti-monument*' was conceived. Florence, in this sense, represents both a material and immaterial urban site for the artist, serving as a starting point for the art-work. According to the artist, the city is strongly oriented toward tourism, with public spaces often seeming more directed at visitors than at residents. In this context, the artist focused on an omnipresent element in public spaces (especially historical ones) in Italian cities: the monument – understood here as a celebratory immovable object commemorating historical events, illustrious figures, or symbols of power, often linked to a glorified past but sometimes perceived as indifferent or disconnected from contemporary social issues. This critical premise led the artist to conceive of an art-work that invites participation and social interaction as a form of critique. The '*Anti-monument*', represented by a mobile pedestal in a classical style—the 'living unit'—stands in stark contrast to the traditional monument, focusing on the here and now by emphasizing the present moment in which the art-work is experienced and, more importantly, used by the public – in this case, 'inhabited'. The concept of the living unit in an urban context like Florence is intended to provoke critical reflection on the notions of home and public space. This highlights a strong connection between the art-work and the immaterial site, which refers to a dimension of social critique tied to both the geographic-cultural and

political-economic context in which it is placed. In this initial phase of AW12BO conception, the city represents a supralocal site, symbolizing broader tensions such as the contrast between historical-artistic heritage and contemporary issues related to the housing crisis, the right to the city, and the privatization of urban public spaces. These themes transcend the specificity of the material site, fitting into a global discourse, but they also surface in the accounts of the artists I interviewed, particularly in relation to recent changes in Bologna.

It is therefore possible to assert that the art-work does not integrate a precise local site within itself, but can be placed in different urban contexts as a 'critical' device. This was indeed realized in the second phase of AW12BO development, in 2021, when the UAP incorporated the art-work into their artistic research and practice, physically moving it from Florence to Bologna and re-signifying it in the post-pandemic context. In this phase, Bologna serves as a material site simply for the placement of the art-work, further emphasizing its nomadic character – its *mobility*. To be sure, mobility becomes a key element of the interdependence between the art-work and the urban site, sparking reflection on temporality and the absence of a fixed localization for the art-work. Although the art-work interacts with the material site where it is located, it is never permanently tied to it, implying that each site represents only a temporary stop in its life cycle as an instantiation of an artistic concept. This physical detachment from a specific site highlights how the identity of the art-work is closely linked to its capacity to be activated in various contexts. In fact, the art-work exists in a 'potential' state when it is closed and static but reaches its full expression only when it is transported and activated, i.e., used, in a specific public urban site. This duality between potential and actual, between static and dynamic, invites critical reflection on the nature of public space and its usage. By moving the art-work to different urban locations, the artists establish an indirect continuity between these sites, while directly exposing them to a symbolic transformation. Each new site, each city where the art-work is placed and then removed, is temporarily included into (but never fully integrated into) the medial profile of the art-work itself, resulting in a temporary reinterpretation of the urban site.

Another crucial aspect of the interdependence between the art-work and the urban site is public participation and interaction. As I have argued, AW12BO is designed to be activated by the people engaging with it. The art-work remains incomplete, or only partially instantiated, until it is used by the public in a given urban site – who open it, explore it, and experience it as a habitable space. Through this activation process, the urban site takes on a relational dimension, shaped by the 'rules of use' established by the artists. Moreover, the highly interactive nature of the art-work underscores the importance of the immaterial site – particularly the social and human relationships that develop around and through it – as a core element of its identity. It is through the integration of this immaterial site that the '*Anti-monument*' sets itself apart from traditional monuments, reversing their conventional meaning. While classical monuments create a one-way relationship with the public, serving as objects of contemplation and commemoration, the '*Anti-*

monument' encourages direct and collective interaction, realized through active participation and use.

Building on these reflections, and with reference to the visual-textual findings presented in Subsection 4.3.2, I argue that it is possible to conceptualize two primary modes of complete instantiation that have emerged for the art-work AW12BO – *'Anti-monument - A Living Unit'*:

1. Instantiation by Movement and State Change:
    - *At time T1*: The pedestal, in its 'deactivated/static' and 'completely closed' state, is moved to the site selected by the artists.
    - *At time T2*: The art-work is fully instantiated when, upon reaching the site and being 'partially or fully open,' it is publicly used in its 'activated/mobile' state.

2. Instantiation by Reference:
    - *Both at time T1 and time T2*: The art-work references the immaterial site on a local level as an 'Italian monument.' On a supralocal level, this reference extends to broader concepts such as 'monument and memorial,' the 'stillness of cultural objects related to memory or history, or a critique of that same 'stillness,' which is subverted by the concept of the monument's 'function.'
    - A second dimension of instantiation by reference involves the relationship between the rules depicted in the plaster bas-reliefs, the actions required to interact directly with the pedestal, and the pedestal itself as a 'monument with a function.' This relationship is likely expressed through indirect interaction with the art-work, whether in its 'deactivated/static' state or its 'activated/mobile' state. For instance, interaction might occur by observing the closed pedestal or by watching others engage with it.

To date, art-work AW12BO has existed in both partial and complete instantiations. The artists have explicitly sanctioned their intention to continue creating new instantiations, potentially in different geographical contexts. An example of this is the '*Anti-monument'* AW13BO. Another attempt was made during an artist residency in Austria, where the artists designed a new prototype—never materially realized—that deviates from the typical pedestal forms of classical Italian monuments, instead drawing inspiration from the distinctive rectangular volumetry of grain silos, with a square base and sloping roofs, commonly found in Austrian towns. However, for this specific anti-monument, it is not possible to consider each of its instantiations as a previous instantiation of the art-work. Instead, the work exists as a continuous succession of partial and complete instantiations, occurring according to the modes described.

AW13BO – 'Anti-monument – Temporary but Resistant' (instantiation 2022)

The results from the visual-textual analysis of the art-work AW13BO – *'Anti-monument – Temporary but Resistant'* highlight an interdependence between the urban site, the intersection of Via Ferrarese and Via Algardi in the Bolognina district, and the art-work itself that weaves together historical, political, and symbolic layers, configuring this connection as a crucial node for interpreting the art-work. As I argued with regard to AW12BO, AW13BO, also part of the UAP's research into anti-monumentality, is not merely an artistic object of commemoration. Instead, it emphasizes the dialogic relationship between local memory and contemporary resistance.

First and foremost, the choice of the material site is highly significant. This area of Bologna is historically linked to the antifascist resistance, particularly the 'Battle of Bolognina'. This clash left a profound mark on local collective memory, making the Bolognina a symbolic site of the partisan struggle. The art-work fully integrates this historical context, together first material and, later, immaterial local urban site, functioning as interactive and – similarly to AW12BO – critical device. It actualizes this memory by allowing the public, through the 'rules of interaction' established by the artists, to become active participants in the construction of memory itself. As argued by the artists, this actualization is tied to the resurgence of neo-fascist sentiments in contemporary Italian politics. Thus, it becomes clear that the art-work, conceived in the political context of 2022-2024 – marked by the rise of the Italian far-right government and the symbolic reenactment of the March on Rome – reflects a sense of "annoyance" with a past that seems to be repeating itself. The artists channeled this unease into the creation of a new '*Anti-monument*' that denounces historical fascism while opposing its contemporary forms. The cardboard modules, which the artists refer to as "antifascist bricks", serve as micro-devices for collective participation, allowing people to write their thoughts and express their political stance, contributing to the construction of a contemporary antifascist identity.

Beyond its physical dimension, the immaterial site integrated into the art-work is rich with symbols tied to historical memory and political struggle. The reference to Bertolt Brecht's poetry, as well as the final confrontation depicted in the A4-sized comic strip between the "antifascist bricks" and the marching fascists emphasizes the art-work's symbolic depth. These elements create a conceptual framework that supports the art-work and renders it significant even beyond its local context. This broader relevance is achieved by incorporating aspects of the immaterial site that speak to a supralocal level, woven with essential concepts such as 'antifascism', 'unity', 'construction', and 'memory'. Antifascism, as understood by the artists in the broader sense of 'resistance to oppression', becomes the central theme around which public participation and interaction with the art-work revolve. This theme is expressed not only through the act of writing on the bricks but also through the symbolic gesture of stacking and connecting them, collectively building a 'wall' as a monument of resistance. The construction of this 'wall' is overtly

metaphorical: each participant contributes to the creation of a shared political identity based on resistance to oppression in all its forms, both past and present. It is possible to argue that this symbolic link between memory and political action is powerfully expressed through the artists' reference to Bologna's tradition of street art and graffiti. The act of writing on a cardboard brick recalls the visual political communication practices that are deeply embedded in the urban life of Bologna. This connection to local street art as a tool for popular expression, subversion, and social protest further anchors the art-work in both the material local context (*the writings* on Bolognese walls) and the immaterial local context (*the act of writing* on walls in Bologna), and vice versa.

As I previously discussed in relation to AW12BO, the concept of counter- or anti-monumentality is also central to understanding the interdependence between site and art-work in the case of AW13BO. Here, the artists use the art-work to challenge the permanence, immovable materiality, and grandeur usually associated with traditional monuments. However, in this instance, the '*Anti-monument*' rejects fixity and permanence altogether. The art-work is temporary, yet simultaneously resistant, as its title suggests. The material used for its elements – fragile cardboard boxes – is strengthened (i.e., 'made resistant') by public involvement and the application of plaster, which stabilizes the stacked 'bricks'. This stacking forms a dynamic structure, constantly evolving through participant intervention, reflecting – one could hypothesize – the impermanence of history and, more importantly, the need for continuous commitment to keeping local memory alive and actual. This temporality highlights the fragile and contingent nature of resistance, while also emphasizing its transformative potential. The Bolognina district, integrated into the art-work, becomes an active site not only because of its historical significance but also due to its current role as a place of 'conflict', particularly concerning local urban and social transformations, such as the gentrification processes affecting the area, as reported by many of the artists I interviewed.

Based on this discussion, and with reference to the visual-textual findings presented in Subsection 4.3.2, I argue that it is possible to conceptualize three primary modes of complete instantiation for the art-work AW13BO – *'Anti-monument – Temporary but Resistant'*:

1. Instantiation by State Change:
    - *Between time T1 and time T2*: The art-work is instantiated when the participant writes their political thought on the white surface of the cardboard 'module,' thereby changing its state from 'unwritten' to 'written.' This mode serves as evidence of interaction with an element of the art-work and is immediately followed by a mode of instantiation by addition and extension.

2. Instantiation by Addition and Extension:
    - *At time T2*: The participant places the 'module' element in its 'written' state on the white wooden platform or atop another 'written'

module already present on the platform. The continuous addition of modules gradually extends the volume of the art-work, completing its instantiation at *time T3*.

3. Instantiation by Reference:
    - *At time T1*: The A4 paper sheet containing the comic strip with the rules for direct and indirect interaction with the art-work references the actions to be performed on the elements of the work, such as 'picking up the module,' 'writing on the module,' 'placing the module,' and 'watching' the unfolding of the direct actions described above. This latter type of indirect interaction, at *time T3*, refers back to the comic strip, connecting to the concepts that characterize the immaterial site of the art-work.

The artists have indicated the possibility of producing new or derived instantiations of the art-work AW13BO. These future instantiations could differ from the one analyzed here in terms of the "theme" addressed by the work, specifically the particular problem or "annoyance" being confronted at that time. It is reasonable to hypothesize that such instantiations would not reference the concepts that constituted the immaterial site of this current instantiation, such as 'antifascism' and the 'memory' of the 'Battle of Bolognina.' Finally, as of today (fall 2024), the art-work has existed in a single instantiation, meaning that no previous instantiations of the art-work have yet emerged.

5.1.3 Discussion of case study 06BO – *Serendippo*

AW17BO – 'Disegnare Dialoghi' (instantiations 2019-2020 and 2022-2023)

The results from the visual-textual analysis of the art-work AW17BO – *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* demonstrate one of the strongest and, in a sense, most 'declared' interdependencies between the urban site and the art-work when compared to the works of the other two UAPs studied here. This interdependence is particularly evident when analyzing the two instantiations of the art-work, which, while sharing a common methodological approach – that of being an artistic *program* – adapt to the specificities of their respective urban sites: the Trilogia Navile and the Savena district.

In the first instantiation of the art-work, which took place between 2019 and 2020, the site selected by the artists was the Trilogia Navile area in the Bolognina district, a zone defined by stark urban and social contrasts. This physical site is marked by visible complexities, including the juxtaposition of luxury residential buildings alongside spaces occupied by homeless people. Additionally, the area once housed socially significant venues in Bologna, such as the XM24 social center and the *Campi Aperti* market, both of which have since disappeared due to the construction of those same luxury developments. All of these are characteristics of

a rapidly transforming territory that here becomes integral to the art-work, as the artists directly address and critique the ongoing processes of gentrification and social exclusion. The question posed by the 'flyer' instrument created by the artists, *"Who does this space belong to?",* is particularly significant in this context. Through this question, they not only inquire about the physical ownership of the site, but also about the sense of belonging and the social use of urban space at large. This question becomes central to the artists' experience of local urban transformations, with the Trilogia Navile emerging as the focal point of "new centralities", that disregard, according to the artists, the endogenous social diversity and fragility of the area into the development processes promoted by the Municipality. The material dimension of the Trilogia Navile urban site, with its electricity cabins chosen as physical supports for the art-work, reflects this tension. The artists intervene on and through these structures, effectively transforming them into urban 'furnishings' by using murals. In this way, the art-work *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* becomes a program of both aesthetic and symbolic re-signification, redefining the perception of urban space and its use. However, the beautification of the electricity cabins should be understood exclusively as an artistic instrument, rather than an end in itself. Indeed, these urban artifacts are transformed from functional and anonymous objects into *mediators*, as they act as vehicles for a collective practical dialogue on local issues concerning the changes in their city; or, in other words, meaning that a group of different people, through the practical act of painting on the cabins, may encounter a chance to reflect, individually and collectively, on the cabins themselves and, thus, on the both physical and social condition of their broader context. This physical intervention represents the first level of interaction between the art-work and the site, an interaction that changes the state of the material support while simultaneously questioning models of urbanization and development. At the same time, the immaterial site, represented by the collective memories and social dynamics that characterize the area, is central to the artistic reflection. The artists directly involve the residents, both 'permanent' and 'temporary', through participatory instruments such as the 'public thematic call'. In this way, they fully integrate public interaction into the art-work, establishing it as a co-creation mechanism from within the art-work itself. Thus, the aesthetic act – although present in the art-work as a marked characteristic, yet not as its ultimate goal – immediately gives way to a collective reappropriation of the specific public urban site, offering residents the opportunity to act both symbolically and tangibly on their urban context. This aspect resonates with the accounts of the artists interviewed, particularly in relation to their critique of the growing institutional and commercial influence on Bologna's urban transformations. A significant convergence emerges in this regard: in both instantiations of the art-work, the artists engage with local institutions (the Municipality of Bologna) through collaboration agreements. However, even though these institutional collaborations enable the realization of their artistic interventions – as will also be seen with AW18BO – *'PubbliCITTÀ'* – the artists maintain a fundamentally critical position regarding the influence of institutions on local urban

policies and development processes. As a consequence, the UAP's work seeks to establish and maintain an 'alternative' space, a space of mediation between tension and resistance across top-down and bottom-up actions, through which the local communities living in the urban sites traversed by the UAP's art-works can reclaim their spaces through art.

The second instantiation of the art-work, taking place between 2022 and 2023 in the Savena district, while maintaining the same operational structure as the first instantiation, introduces a more specific reflection on the theme of public housing, clearly demonstrating how the programmatic nature of the art-work adapts and transforms based on the context in which it is *applied*, at least as long as it remains within the specific context of the city of Bologna. As I have shown, here the chosen site is the INA-Casa '*Cavedone*' residential complex, an area with a long history tied to post-war Italian public housing policies and developments. The artists focus on the evolution of these residential spaces, once again engaging the local community in a dialogue aimed at highlighting, or rather 'making evident', the critical issues related to Bologna's transformations – in this case, the housing crisis and, more generally, the right to housing. This thematic shift is also reflected in the immaterial instruments used by the artists. For instance, while in the Trilogia Navile the 'flyer' was accompanied by critical reflections on ongoing urban transformations, at Savena it focuses more on inviting direct participation from the residents. The question *"Who does this space belong to?"* takes on a different nuance here, reflecting the long-established history and identities of the INA-Casa complex's residents, in contrast to a site that has experienced fundamentally different social transformations, such as the Trilogia Navile. A distinctive aspect of the second instantiation is the introduction of the 'experiential walks', which represent an additional feature of the unique interdependence between the art-work and its urban site. This type of activity, absent in the first instantiation, emphasizes a gradual shift away from aesthetic intervention in the UAP's programmatic practice and, conversely, a deepening of the experiential and performative dimension of the situated artistic act. The walks thus serve as another narrative instrument for further integrating and exploring the immaterial site of the art-work, composed of stories, memories, and social relationships that connect the past and present of a specific territory, articulating it within and through the art-work itself.

Upon closer examination, the art-work AW17BO, in its two instantiations, reveals a constant adaptability to the specific urban context. This, in my view, is the predominant quality of the interdependence between this work by the UAP *Serendippo* and the urban site. In fact, while the immaterial tools and participatory-programmatic methodology created by the artists remain consistent, the art-work changes its meaning, or rather, re-specifies it, based on the characteristics of the urban site and the local social dynamics. At the Trilogia Navile, the focus is on the issue of informal occupation of public space and the tension between urban policies and the social needs of the population. In this context, the electricity cabins are fully integrated into the art-work as symbols of a territory in transition, where the aesthetic-participatory redevelopment carried out by the artists intertwines with an

explicit critique of local social inclusion (or, according to the artists, of "exclusion") policies. At Savena, on the other hand, the central matter turns to public housing and its history, linked to the specific site of the INA-Casa '*Cavedone*' complex. The intervention on the same types of structures, the electricity cabins, but also the choice to include new urban elements like the local market shutters, is enriched here by a reflection aimed at actualizing the historical memory of Bolognese (and, at a supralocal level, Italian) public housing, in relation to current conditions tied to the housing crisis in Bologna. In this regard, it is also worth noting that the art-work AW17BO shows clear connections with the works of the UAP *This Is So Temporary*, such as AW12BO and AW11BO. In particular, AW17BO – *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* shares with AW11BO a programmatic and composite nature, which allows it to be re-specified at different sites and adapted to various themes, instantiation after instantiation. However, AW11BO exhibits a decidedly less structured programmatic nature, as for each instantiation, the artists retain only one instrumental element of the art-work – the self-published magazine – while producing other internal elements that may be weakly or strongly specific to the urban site. Meanwhile, in *Serendippo*'s practice, the artists systematically use the same set of 'instruments' – the 'flyer', the 'cartography', the 'collaboration agreements', etc. – and through those, they intervene in the urban site, consistently aiming to its full integration in the art-work.

Based on this discussion, and with reference to the visual-textual findings presented in Subsection 4.4.1, across its two instantiations, I argue that it is possible to conceptualize two primary modes of instantiation for the art-work AW17BO – *'Disegnare Dialoghi'*. These two modes are:

1. Instantiation by State Change:
    - *At time T2*: The local artists selected through the 'public thematic call' instrument, along with asylum seekers, some residents of the two sites (the Trilogia Navile and '*il Cavedone'* residential complex), and the UAP artists, directly interact with the art-work's area, previously identified and prepared, by painting the selected 'images' on the designated supports (the murals on the electricity cabins and the shutters of the shops). In doing so, they change the state of the support from 'unpainted' to 'painted,' completing the instantiation of the art-work at *time T3*. In both instantiations, this mode is closely linked to the instantiation by addition.

2. Instantiation by Addition:
    - *At time T2*: The state change of the support from 'unpainted' to 'painted' is achieved through a process of manipulating the support itself, involving the addition of both material and immaterial elements to its surface. On the material side, paint is applied to create the murals on the external walls of the electricity cabins or the shutters. On the immaterial side, the 'images' selected by the artists

are progressively layered over the supports, which were originally white or green in color, respectively, on the cabins or the shutters.

The artists have not explicitly declared an intention to continue producing new instantiations of the art-work AW17BO. However, I argue that it is still possible to consider each instantiation as a previous instantiation of the art-work, given that the six instruments created by the artists, as well as the 'logo,' are recurrent and repeated in each instantiation. Furthermore, the creation of these instruments for each UAP art-work program, and their repetition for subsequent instantiations, is a well-established practice of these artists. In my view, this approach plausibly ensures the artwork's continuity over time and its capacity to be re-specified in relation to multiple sites.

AW18BO – 'PubbliCITTÀ' (instantiations 2020 and 2024)

Similarly to what has been discussed regarding the art-work AW17BO, the results from the visual-textual analysis of the art-work AW18BO – *'PubbliCITTÀ'* highlight a strong interdependence between the art-work and the city of Bologna, which in this case is embodied across a multitude of its sites. As I have shown, the art-work – organized through a programmatic structure – generates a series of instantiations that involve various urban sites and 'street' elements in Bologna. I argue that the integral connection between *'PubbliCITTÀ'* and its multiple local urban sites, understood both on a material and immaterial level, constitutes one of the key elements in interpreting this art-work. This connection becomes evident when comparing the two instantiations on which I have focused my analysis: the 2020 instantiation and the more recent one from 2024. In both instantiations, the urban site becomes an active subject fully integrated into the medial profile of the art-work. The entire city of Bologna – from its historic center to its peripheral areas, particularly focusing on urban elements related to public mobility, such as bus stops, information kiosks, and TPer ticket offices – serves as both the material support on which the art-work is installed and the immaterial context with which the art-work interacts and through which it takes shape, comprising local cultural, social, and political meanings.

In 2020, the instantiation *'Lost & Found 1980-2020'* establishes a dialogue with the city's history and collective memory, particularly with the events of 1980's. It is likely that the material spaces selected by the artists hold strategic significance, rather than having being chosen at random. To the artists, bus stops and advertising kiosks symbolize both mobility and urban interaction, as they are places of daily transit connecting different parts of Bologna, from central to peripheral neighborhoods. In this way, the art-work 'invades' and, in a sense, reclaims these spaces, integrating them into itself and transforming them, in this specific instantiation, into sites of historical and political reflection. By doing so, the art-work actualizes and connects the memory of the past with the present lives of the city's inhabitants – both permanent residents and those 'passing through' Bologna.

The images selected by the artists and subsequently displayed at these sites '*over-write*' Bologna's urban landscape, its 'streets', temporarily altering its meaning – at least, for the duration of the art-work's instantiation. In this sense, the reference to the 1980 Bologna Massacre at the Central railway station is particularly significant: the artists' choice to install the 'images' at bus stops near the train station underscores the intention to build both a physical and immaterial connection between the artistic program enacted by the art-work and one of the key sites of the tragedy. This connection, according to the artists, aims to publicly reveal the historical layering of the specific urban site. However, the public interaction thus determined is weak, in the sense that it occurs indirectly and primarily through visual channels. In immaterial terms, the urban site expands beyond its local dimension and embraces supralocal concepts that the artists strongly regard as transformative, such as historical memory, active citizenship, and the role of the 'public' city as a stage for sociopolitical events. Moreover, through the programmatic instrument of the 'public thematic call' and the 'images' derived from it, the artists establish connections between local historical events (such as the Bologna Massacre) and broader national phenomena (such as the terrorism of the Years of Lead, the political crisis, and the economic transformations of the 1980s) within the flow of the city's everyday life.

In 2024, the instantiation *'Lavori in Corso'* marks a radical shift in the interdependence between the art-work and its urban site. Whereas in 2020 the art-work manifested through a composite program of images and installations, in 2024 the artists opted for a simplified, symbolic, and, in a sense, more 'direct' intervention – the yellow sticker – abandoning part of the programmatic nature of the art-work. In fact, the 2024 instantiation moves away from that approach, adopting a more self-referential attitude. The yellow stickers represent, according to the artists, a subtle gesture of critique and protest against the lack of public funding for culture and art in Bologna. This theme emerged vividly in the accounts of many of the artists interviewed, alongside the commercialization of public space and culture in the city. Such an attitude re-centers the art-work on an autonomous and markedly subversive artistic action. The shift moves from weak public involvement (i.e., participation in the art-work's instantiation, as in 2020's iteration) to an absence of involvement in 2024 – evidenced, for instance, by the lack of a public thematic call. On the material level, the yellow stickers with the UAP logo depicting a little figure digging inside the profile of Bologna's historic center are applied to the supports of previous instantiations of AW18BO, creating a direct interaction with the pre-existing traces of the art-work. This represents a unique case among the works of the three UAPs studied. The decision not to produce new images but to 'overlay' and 'stratify' these stickers on top of previous instantiations suggests a reflection on the concept of transformation and overwriting: the art-work itself becomes a 'work in progress' – indeed, a *'Lavori in Corso'* – where both the material site and the art-work are subject to continuous changes and reinterpretations. Keeping with this line of interpretation, the discontinuity in the art-work's praxeological structure manages to maintain a continuity and integrity

of meaning. In fact, it is indeed possible to argue that the yellow color of the stickers and the theme of 'works in progress' symbolically evoke the ongoing transformation of the city, not only in physical but also political and social terms.

Building on this discussion, and with reference to the visual-textual findings presented in Subsection 4.4.2, across its two instantiations, I argue that it is possible to conceptualize two primary modes of instantiation for the art-work AW18BO – *'PubbliCITTÀ'*:

1. Instantiation by Change of State:
    - For the 2020 instantiation, with one exception:
        - *At time T1*: The UAP artists directly interact with the art-work's area, previously identified and prepared, by installing the 'images' selected through the 'public thematic call' instrument on various street supports (bus stops, octagonal kiosk, ticket booth) using adhesive methods. This action changes the state of the support from 'transparent' to 'opaque,' thereby completing the instantiation of the art-work at time T2. In this process, this mode of instantiation is closely linked to the mode of instantiation by addition.

2. Instantiation by Addition:
    - For the 2024 instantiation and one version of the 2020 instantiation:
        - *At time T2* (2024) and *at time T1* (2020): The artists act upon the supports identified in the previous instantiation of the art-work for the 2024 instantiation, as well as on an apartment block for one version of the 2020 instantiation. In the 2024 instantiation, they apply a sticker to the digital print panels that are part of the previous instantiation of the work. In the 2020 instantiation, they install a banner on the façade of the apartment building in the Bolognina area. In both cases, new elements are added to the support defined for the art-work.

The artists have frequently expressed their intention to continue producing new instantiations of the art-work AW18BO. However, it is currently impossible to predict with certainty how the art-work will evolve, especially in light of the break from the UAP's established creative practices that occurred with the 2024 instantiation. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable to consider each instantiation, including the 2024 one, as a previous instantiation of the art-work. This is because, even with the repetition of just one of the instruments created by the artists, i.e., the 'logo', the work manages to maintain continuity over time and retain its capacity for re-specification.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 Answering the research questions

1. *How does the transformation of the city (*of Bologna*), as experienced by artists, impact their urban artistic practice?*
    - *How do artists make sense of the spatial, cultural, and socio-economic changes in Bologna, and how do these perceptions influence their artistic practicing?*
    - *Do artists adapt their artistic practicing and identity to the evolving urban environment of Bologna?*

Addressing the first research question, I argue that the transformation of the city of Bologna has a significant impact on the artists, particularly influencing the praxeological dimension of their work – i.e., determining specific methods and logics for creating their artworks. Artists experience and interpret Bologna's urban changes in diverse ways, depending on the tangible and intangible specificities of the urban sites in which they intervene, whether they are long-term citizens or temporary residents of the city. The artist's present experience of Bologna, materialized through their highly processual and conceptual artistic practicing, provides a sufficient condition for establishing a transformative, dynamic, and temporal understanding of their city and its physical-architectural and socially constructed spaces.

This understanding may, in turn, shape distinct yet heterogeneous artistic 'practical' identities and 'researches' (i.e., 'creative approaches') within the same urban context. A longitudinal study on the evolution of an artist's or group of artists' urban practice over time and space in a given city could further explore this hypothesis - a line of research I propose in Subsection 5.2.4.

2. *In what ways does the transformation of the city (*of Bologna*) influence the creative processes underlying the production of urban artworks?*
    - *In what ways do artists shape their creative processes in relation to changes in Bologna's architectural and urban environment, as well as in its cultural, social, political and economic landscape?*
    - *How do artists' reflections on Bologna's transformation influence their choice of mediums and methods employed in the production of their urban artworks? And how does is shape the stages of art creation, from conceptualization to execution?*
    - *How do artists' interpretations of these changes differ when they engage with different sites within Bologna?*

Addressing the second research question, and looking across the findings from the three case studies of urban artistic practice in Bologna, I argue that the

transformation of the urban site on which the artist intervenes occurs through either the integration or the inclusion of the site itself within the artwork, understood as a site-specific creative process. In turn, through these processes of integrating or including the site, the artwork is constituted, i.e., instantiated, according to specific modes emerging from the interaction between the practical work of the artist (including their sanctions regarding materials and modes of public interaction) and the present condition (as in, current to the process) of the selected urban site. This mutual process defines multiple and highly heterogeneous interdependencies between a given artwork and a particular urban site, understood both materially (architecturally constructed) and immaterially (socially constructed).

The research findings also allow for the hypothesis that certain modes of producing urban art-works – emerging from an artist's work in a given city, which in turn might shape artistic identities and practices – are specific – i.e., more recurrent – to that same city. However, this hypothesis would need to be explored through a comparative interurban study - which I propose in Subsection 5.2.4.

3. *What interdisciplinary methodologies can be developed and employed to explore the practices and processes of creating art in urban spaces, particularly in relation to the transformation of these spaces as experienced by the artists?*
    - *What are the potential limitations of existing qualitative methods in studying the impact of urban transformation on artistic practices and artists working in urban settings, and how can these be addressed?*
    - *What approaches, methods, or techniques could be developed to explore and analyze the interplay between visual and textual data in the study of artistic practicing in urban settings?*

Addressing the third research question, and looking across the findings from the three case studies of urban artistic practice in Bologna, I argue that in order to thoroughly investigate artistic practices in urban spaces and their interdependence with city transformations, it is essential to explore and establish interdisciplinary methodologies that triangulate and combine qualitative approaches, particularly ethnographic and multimodal – such as visual-textual – both for data collection and analysis. Such methodologies could help to 'mitigate' the limitations of existing qualitative methods, which may, for instance, struggle to capture the complexity of interactions between artists, artworks, and urban space, especially when these interactions are dynamic, ephemeral, and involve both material and conceptual-immaterial aspects, thereby bringing academic research closer to the 'practical-lived domains' of the practitioners.

I argue that the iterative visuo-textual descriptive and diagrammatic methodology proposed and demonstrated through my studies constitutes a valid – albeit certainly modest – contribution in this direction. I contend that focusing on the production of dense visual-textual descriptions to map artworks in urban public spaces in praxeological and temporal terms allows – through the recounting of the

artist's work in images and words, and, collaboratively, between artist and researcher – for a deeper analysis, representation, exploration, and understanding of the internal complexity of a type of contemporary artistic productions that can often said to be 'ontologically heterogeneous' in terms of artistic forms, creative intentions, materials used, duration, and reception. This also allows for the articulation of new conceptions of the creative and design process, either by moving beyond or revising 'phase-based' models of creativity in light of more complex systems of actions, events, and meanings.

The deepening of such methodologies would support further development of artistic research, design research, or arts-based academic research programs. Such methodologies could reveal promising avenues for investigating the relationship between art and the city. Additionally, they could contribute to the development of strategies for documenting and preserving ephemeral, process-based, and performance-based artworks, both within cultural institutions and as a resource for artists and art professionals. I outline a few practical contributions along these lines in Subsection 5.2.4.

5.2.2 Addressing the aims

This dissertation has attempted to:

1. *To develop an understanding of how artists experience and interpret the spatial, cultural, and socio-economic transformations of the city (*of Bologna*) and how these experiences influence their urban artistic practices.*

2. *To examine in what ways the ongoing transformation of the city (*of Bologna*) influences the creative processes of local artists, particularly in the production of site-specific urban artworks.*

3. *To explore (the possibility of) interdisciplinary methodologies that effectively capture the complex relationship between urban transformation and artistic practices in the city.*

What I have accomplished is a showcase of some of the natural and ordinary ways certain individuals – i.e., artists – constitutively organize and enact their own creative process – i.e., the urban art-work – through an organized series of praxeological and social instances (actions, objects, events, words, gestures, concepts, materials, interactions, etc.) that are both localized – i.e., site-specific – and temporal. In doing so, they situate this process in (by integration or inclusion in the process itself) a specific space within a particular city; a space that is both tangible (architecturally constructed) and intangible (socially constructed).

Naturally, the production of art aimed at urban public space is far more nuanced and complex than what these studies have been able to demonstrate. For this reason, the achievement of my initial research aims must be understood within

the specific context investigated by this thesis, namely: the city of Bologna; a sample of twelve local artistic practices; and specifically, the art-works of only three of these artistic practices.

This study, therefore, cannot claim to speak for all art produced for urban public space, nor does it provide a definition of a specific type of art in urban public spaces. However, tracing the 'practical trajectories' of how an individual artfully translates what they feel, see, and understand – i.e., experience – regarding their changing urban environment into concrete artistic processes and objects represents both the starting and ending point (and, hopefully, a point of further opening, as I will discuss in Subsection 5.2.4) of this study.

5.2.3 Limitations of the study

Every research can be discussed in terms of its strengths, but also of its limitations. Here, I would like to briefly reflect on the main limitations of my study, particularly in terms of its conduction and the methodological choices.

Firstly, I find it important to highlight that this study is based on a qualitative paradigm, which adopts an interpretive approach to reality. Such an approach does not guarantee representativeness, but rather foreshadows a partial and situated understanding of the explored phenomenon. Consequently, some aspects and elements of the phenomenon are explored in depth, while others may be excluded or only marginally addressed. Additionally, particular attention is given to artists' experiences and perceptions of change, or to visual, material, and spatial evidence, at the expense of a 'probabilistic' account. Naturally, these limitations are inherent to the chosen research paradigm and data collection and analysis methods, and were taken into consideration during the initial structuring phase of the study. However, I believe these limitations are balanced by the advantages of conducting research in this manner. In this context, advantages are related to the specific choice of a case study design, as I have extensively discussed in Section 3.1 of Chapter 3. In line with Merriam & Tisdell (2016, p.50-51), a case study approach offers "a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers' experiences. These insights can be construed as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research; hence, case study plays an important role in advancing a field's knowledge base". Numerous criticisms have been raised against such an approach. Among them, the issue of generalizability resulting from the study of a single unit may emerge more prominently here than in other types of qualitative research. I have addressed generalizability and my understanding of it in Subsection 3.1.3 of Chapter 3. However, echoing Stake's arguments (2005), I would like to emphasize here that much can be learned from detailed study and 'thick' descriptive narrative of a single, specific unit, or from interactions among a limited set of units. Moreover, the general exists in the particular – as Erickson (Erickson, 1986, in Merriam and

Tisdell, 2016, p.51) stated – which can represent knowledge transfer starting from the reader, not (exclusively) from the researcher. Indeed, I do agree with the argument that it is the reader who determines what is more or less "personally useful" (Stake, 2005, p.455) and applicable to their own contexts.

Secondly, further limitations could be linked to the choice of employing triangulation among different methods, an approach that I have used here both in data collection and analysis. In this regard, potential pitfalls are usually associated with the risk of paying little attention to the fact that each method addresses the specific problem it seeks to investigate in a particular way, potentially leading – in the worst case scenario – to a sort of 'methodological eclecticism'. I contend that this limitation becomes more apparent when triangulation is viewed solely as a strategy for validation and achieving objectivity of interpretation. However, as I have already discussed in Section 3.2 of Chapter 3, my use of methodological triangulation did not start from this assumption. Instead, it aimed to introduce a deeper and purposefully heterogeneous understanding of the explored phenomenon by looking at it from 'different perspectives' and through 'different lenses'.

Lastly, there are limitations that emerged during the conduction of the research, primarily of both practical and 'attitudinal' nature. Among the various limitations determined by practical contingencies, I highlight here the (sometimes insurmountable) challenges related to accessing the field and the availability of resources (primarily in terms of time and finances). These limitations necessarily restricted the scope and size of the sample of UAPs investigated, although efforts were made to ensure diversity within the sample. Another issue, which I believe may be seen as both a limitation and an advantage, is the inherent subjectivity of the researcher, as well as their "sensitivity and integrity" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.52). As I have emphasized elsewhere in this manuscript, I am convinced that the researcher, together with their ever changing preconceptions of the studied phenomenon, serves as the primary *instrument* in their own research, not only in the processes of data collection and analysis, but throughout the entire research journey. Therefore, constant reflexivity and self-inquiry is essential for awareness of one's biases, preconceptions, and positioning. My interpretation of the artistic work of the various individuals *with* whom I studied, in relation to the transformation of Bologna, cannot be considered impartial, as it inevitably reflects my own cultural, social, and political background, as well as my worldviews. Indeed, different positions and sensibilities produce different narratives; had I approached this study without my prior training and professional experience in the artistic and architectural field, my interpretations would likely have been different, as a result of having structured this study differently. Nevertheless, I believe that in an interdisciplinary research context like the one I have attempted to 'navigate' with this study, the researcher's *agency* plays a central role in delineating the means through which to interpret the explored phenomena, alongside the continuous exercise of a certain *skeptical detachment* (Fine, 2019).

5.2.4 Contribution of the findings

I argue that it is possible to outline at least two primary macro-areas of contribution of the findings from this dissertation.

Perspectives for further research

One line of research could expand the field of study to other cities through a *comparative, interurban investigation*. Building on the analysis of Bologna, this research could be extended to explore how artistic practices respond to urban transformations in other Italian or international cities undergoing similar or different urban changes. As I argued in Chapter 3, this perspective also aligns with the view of Barbehön et al. (2016, p.241), who state that "for interpretive urban research, there are no cities that are more or less suitable for the study of urban distinctiveness". A comparison between different, distinctive urban realities would allow for the identification of recurring ways of 'making art' in urban public spaces, as well as significant divergencies, along with practices that are specific to each context. This would deepen and simultaneously problematize the understanding of the interdependence between art, urban space and its transformations. Another dimension of comparative research could focus on different types of artistic practices within the same city or across different cities. The research could compare so-called 'spontaneous' and non-institutional artistic practices (like those explored in this dissertation) with more institutional and centralized practices, such as those associated with large cultural events or publicly initiated and funded. This comparison would evaluate how the interdependence between 'making art', institutions, and urban space differs between experimental creative experiences and more traditional art production and fruition models.

A second line of research could take an opposite direction, narrowing the focus to the practice of a single artist or group of artists within a single city through a *longitudinal study*. This type of study would be particularly useful in understanding the evolution of an artist's creative practices in relation to their experience of changes in their urban environments over time. Such a study would monitor and analyze, at different periods in time, how an art-work is constituted and, more specifically, the modes of production in relation to the local urban site or sites and their transformations, providing a dynamic and diachronic perspective. This research approach could be grounded in the field of urban aesthetics or adopt an ethnomethodological (and, certainly, ethnographic) approach to studying the relationship between art and the city, as suggested by the recent ethnomethodological works of Yaël Kreplak, among other scholars. Such a program of research would involve real-time study of the formation and consequential, reflexive organization of practical, situated creative actions surrounding the production of an art-work directed at urban public space.

Practical implications

A first practical implication of this dissertation concerns the potential contribution to the *understanding, documentation, preservation, and development of artworks* directed toward urban public space, particularly considering the ephemeral, conceptual, process-based, performance-based, and contextual nature of these artistic interventions. The research could offer, especially through the methodological and analytical approach I have proposed and demonstrated, valuable insights for developing documentation and conservation strategies and procedures that begin with a serious acknowledgment of the creative processes as understood and constituted by the artists. Given the temporary and conceptual nature of many works, an essential practice for preservation would entail their accurate documentation through visuo-textual mapping. Indeed, in a context where, as I have demonstrated, the artwork integrates immaterial components into its medial profile, such as public interaction, it is necessary to treat these components with the same importance as the physical material that constitutes any 'traditional' work of art (e.g., the marble that makes up a statue). The loss or deterioration of an immaterial component of the work, if not sanctioned by the artist, could alter the work itself and, consequently, 'damage' it. Understanding these dynamics through a processual, descriptive, and ethnographic mapping of the artwork could facilitate practices surrounding the documentation and preservation of urban public artworks. A similar argument has been advanced by Sherri Irvin (2022) and Elisa Caldarola (2020) regarding contemporary art practices within institutional contexts. I agree with their arguments, and I believe they can be safely extended to the understanding and treatment of urban art-works, as analyzed in my studies, with relevance and interest both for the artists who develop these works and for professionals within cultural institutions. The research could contribute to creating guidelines and methodologies for choosing and maintaining immaterial mediums for these works, aiming to ensure a deeper understanding of their endogenous and exogenous functioning, with strict attention to artistic intent. To be clear, it is not my intention to suggest that there should be 'correct' or 'optimal' practices that an artist must follow to create their art in urban public space, but rather to offer modest reflections that may or may not influence their daily creative practice. Naturally, the final decision on the usefulness of these suggestions remains fully with the artist.

A second practical implication of this research concerns its contributions in educational terms, particularly for the *design of new interdisciplinary and arts-based academic training programs* and the creation of professional roles in the field of urban art, cultural management, and urban regeneration through culture. Such programs could include primarily workshop-based courses that explore the relationship between art and urban space, drawing on the direct experiences of already active practitioners. Students could be trained to create artistic projects that engage with or respond to transforming urban dynamics, particularly developing a reflexive understanding of their own creative processes in relation to the chosen contexts of the artwork produced, and the material elements (such as architecture and infrastructure) and immaterial elements (historical memory, social interaction,

cultural identity) involved. As a speculative hypothesis, exploring this practical application might outline interesting opportunities for establishing training programs in these areas, equipping students with specific and diverse artistic skills, while also suggesting roles of artistic mediation between communities and institutions to facilitate dialogue and active citizen participation in the creation of shared public spaces. In this sense, an (already) emerging professional figure could be that of the *urban art facilitator*, an expert in managing collaborative processes between artists, communities, and local administrations. This role would be responsible for organizing workshops, participatory events, co-creation art activities, and so forth.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

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Chapter 3 – The methodological approach

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Chapter 4 – Data analysis and findings

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Chapter 5 – Discussion and conclusion

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Appendix A – *'Io e Te'*
Appendix B – *'La Palazzina dei Sogni'*
Appendix C – *'Farò'* 2023
Appendix D – *'Farò'* 2024
Appendix E – *'Anti-monument-A Living Unit'*
Appendix F – *'Anti-monument- Temporary but Resistant'*
Appendix G – *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* 2019-2020
Appendix H – *'Disegnare Dialoghi'* 2022-2023
Appendix I – *'PubbliCITTÀ'* 2020a
Appendix L – *'PubbliCITTÀ'* 2020b
Appendix M – *'PubbliCITTÀ'* 2020c
Appendix N – *'PubbliCITTÀ'* 2020d
Appendix O – *'PubbliCITTÀ'* 2024

Appendix P – Consent Information sheet for participants



The artists and some of their collaborators holding the streetlamp hats sourced from the Giardini (PGI)



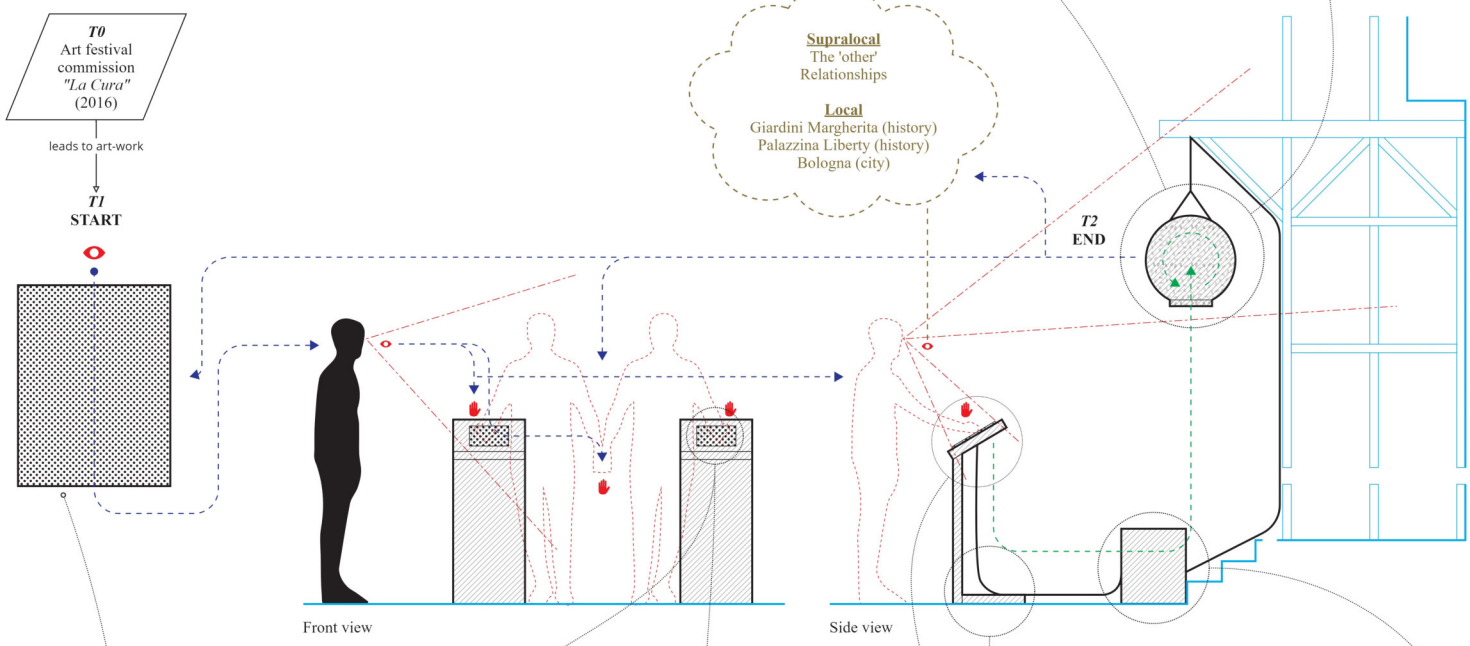
Artists' collaborators installing the streetlamp hats on the Palazzina' scaffolding (PGI)



Various people interacting with the art-work elements (the yellow wooden pedestals) and with each other during the evening of the performance (PGI)

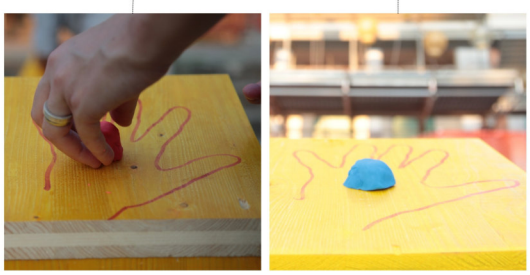


One of the streetlamp hats in its 'lit' state (PGI)





The visual-textual document containing the rules for interacting with the art-work, displayed on one of the yellow wooden pedestals at the entrance to the art-work area (PGI)



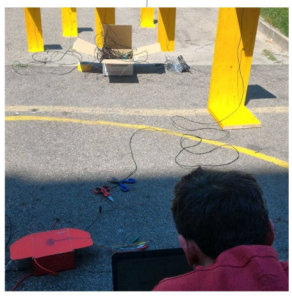
One of the artists installing one of the two electrical contacts on the top surface of the wooden pedestal, centered within an outline of an open hand. The other electrical contact, already installed, is shown in the figure on the right (PGI)



Typical detail of the base attachment of a wooden pedestal (PGI)



Two people performing the interactive action described in the rules document, holding hands while pressing the electrical contact on the upper surface of the wooden pedestal (PGI)



One of the artists' collaborators programming the electronic connections between the various interactive pedestals and the streetlamp's hats (PGI)

Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

Modes of interaction with the art-work

- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

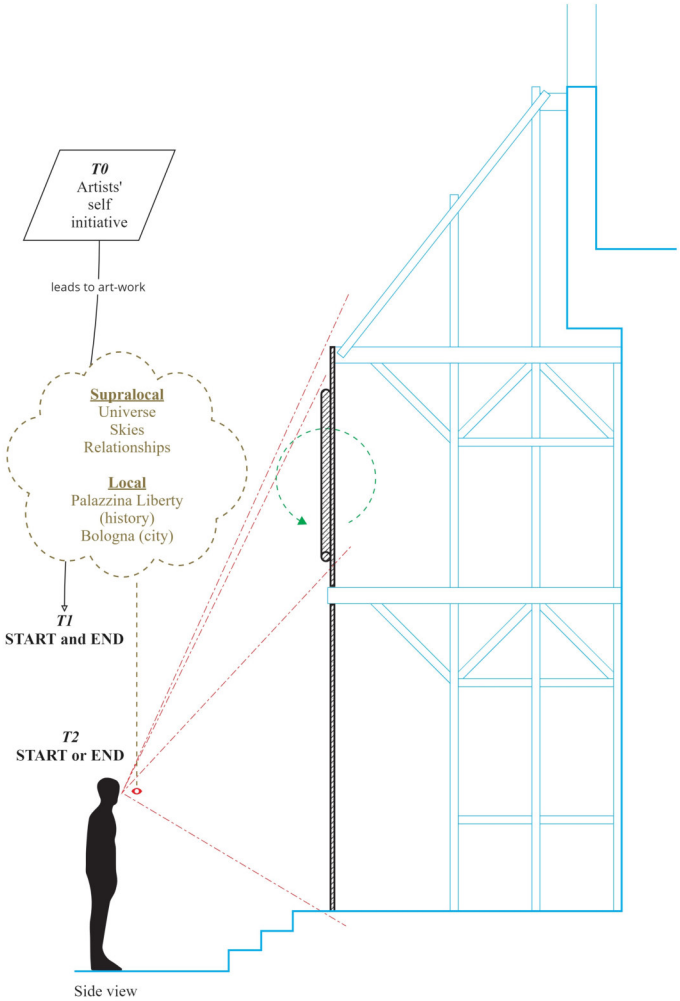
Modes of instantiation of the art-work

- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

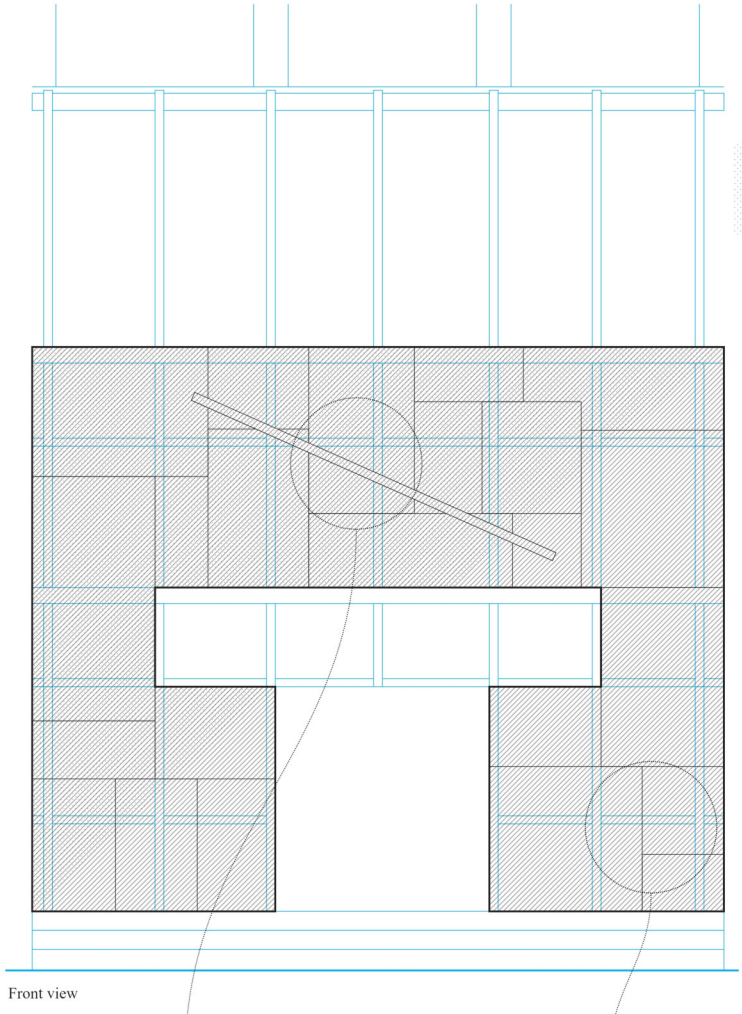
Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.



The figure on the left shows the site of the art-work, the front facade of the Palazzina Liberty at Giardini Margherita, shown with the scaffolding from the renovation work, without the art-work. The figure on the right, a digital sketch/concept produced by the artists, shows the same site with the art-work installed on the scaffolding. (PGI)



Side view



Front view



Detail depicting a typical interaction with the artwork installed on the scaffolding. People observing the installation from a distance, while moving towards it (PGI)



One of the two gallery pieces previously created by the artists, *Shooting Stars*, is part of the art-work instantiation (PGI)



One of the two artists working on another gallery piece they previously created, *Under the Same Sky*, which is also part of the art-work instantiation (PGI)

Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

Modes of interaction with the art-work

- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

Modes of instantiation of the art-work

- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.



Side and rear views of the installation *faro*, the first instantiation of the art-work, located in the front garden of the artists' warehouse. The images show how the metal column, painted in white, magenta, and black, can be climbed to reach a niche at its top (RGI)

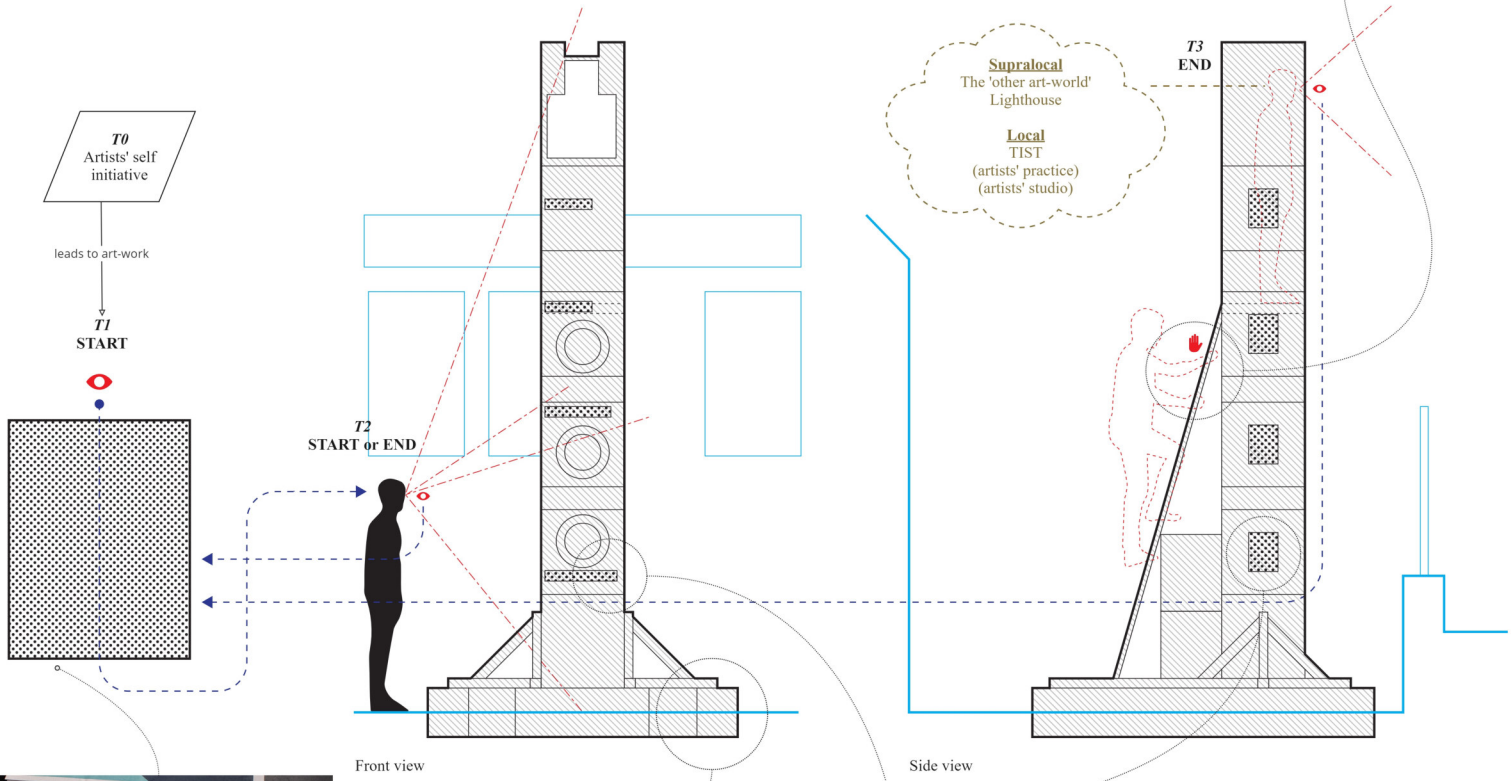


Several stages of the column's making, from the construction of the concrete foundations, to the lifting of its unfinished metal structure.

In the third image at the bottom, one of the artists is spray-painting the column's surfaces (PGI)



Some typical interactions with the art-work (PGI)



Front view

Side view



The first edition of the self-published magazine *Farò*. This visual-textual document serves as rules for understanding and interacting with the art-work (PGI)



Detail of the foundations of the metal column (RGI)



Details of the metal column. The figure on the left shows the white and magenta paint patterns and the black inscriptions painted by the artists on the front and side surfaces of the column, displaying the title of the art-work. The figure on the right captures one of the artists useing the column to hoist the UAP flag, facing the town of Rastignano (PGI)

Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

Modes of interaction with the art-work

- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

Modes of instantiation of the art-work

- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.





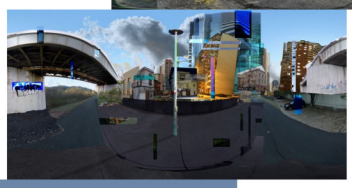
The concrete and metal blocks with QR codes that the artists installed along the art-work's route, either embedded in the ground or anchored to streetlight poles (RGI)

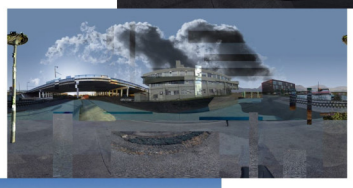




Two typical interactions with the artwork.
In the top figure, people use their cell phones to scan the QR codes placed along the artwork's route.
In the bottom figure, the same people looking at the speculative landscapes created by the artists on their cell phone screens (PGI)

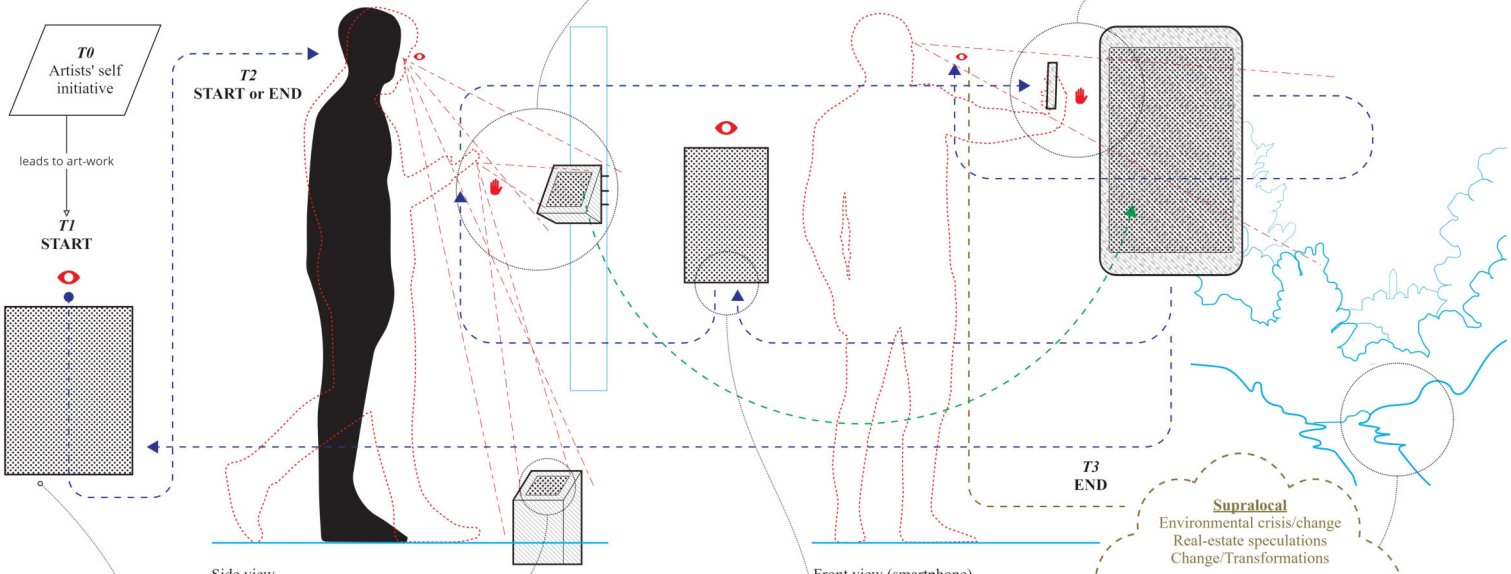








Panoramic photos showcasing four of the five speculative digital landscapes created by the artists, accessible via the QR codes positioned along the artwork's route (PGI)

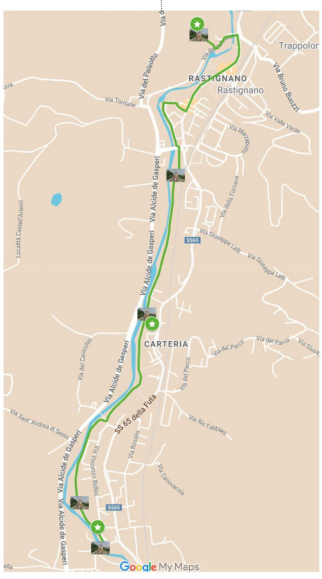




The third edition of the self-published magazine *Farò*. In this instantiation, this visual-textual document serves as a secondary rule for understanding and interacting with the art-work (PGI)



Detail of the magenta-painted concrete block installed in the ground. The QR code represents a primary interaction rule for the art-work (RGI)



The digital map of the art-work's path, accessible by scanning a QR code found in the magazine pages and on the artists' website. The map indicates the locations along the route where the blocks with QR codes are placed (PGI)





Two excerpts from the real-life landscape visible along the art-work's route, the Savena creek. They highlight the devastation caused by the stream's floods and the extensive construction site of the new highway (RGI)

Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

Modes of interaction with the art-work

- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

Modes of instantiation of the art-work

- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.



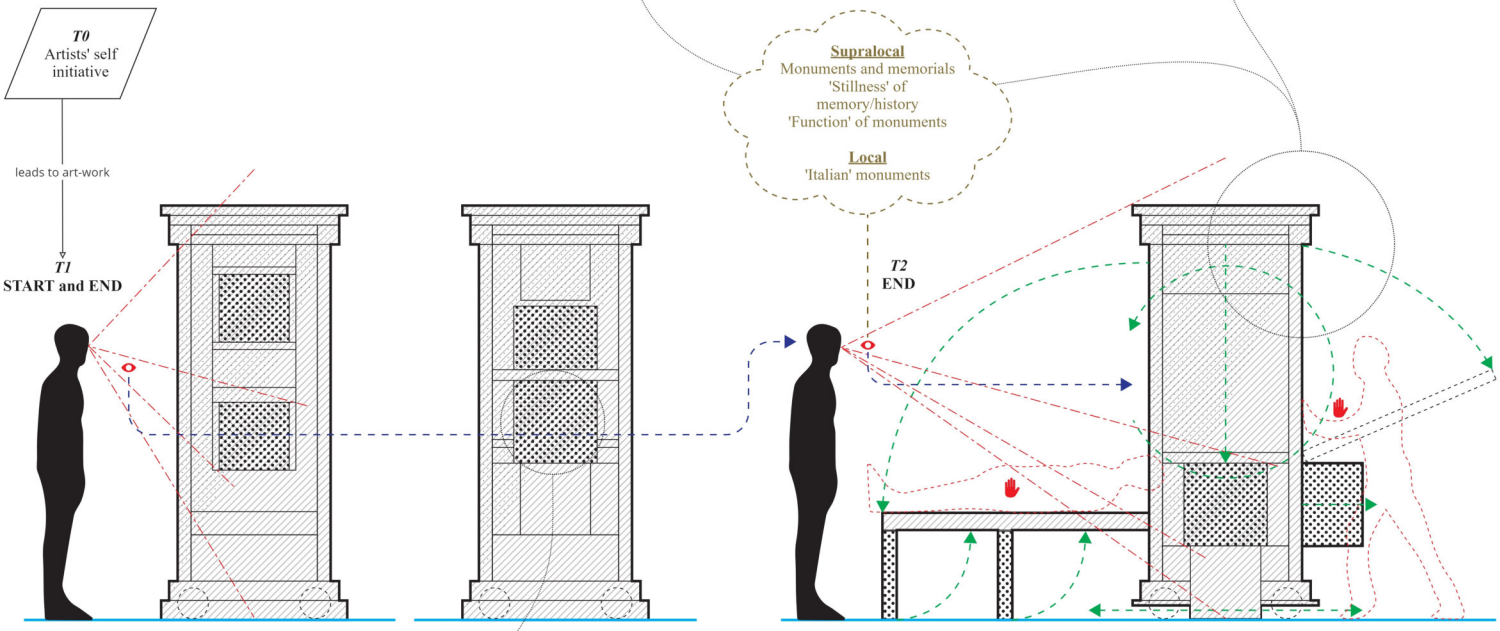
The art-work in its deactivated/static state, kept inside the artists' studio (RGI)



The art-work in its activated/mobile state, transported by one of the artists to the chosen site to be opened and used (PGI)

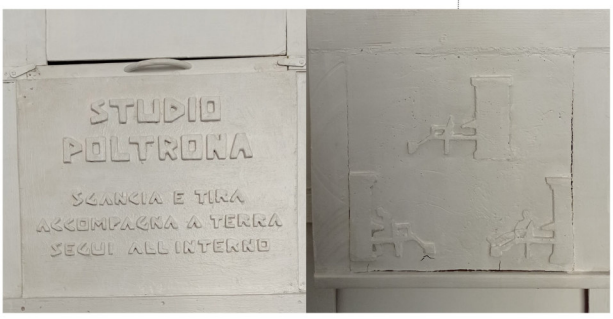


The art-work in its activated/mobile state at the chosen site. The figure shows typical interactions of people with the art-work and its open parts (PGI)



Side views

Side views





Three details of the bas-reliefs on the surfaces/panels of the art-work. The bas-reliefs serve as rules, depicting specific actions that a person must perform to interact with the art-work (RGI)



The art-work in its activated/mobile state, kept inside the artists' studio, with some of its parts open (RGI)

Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

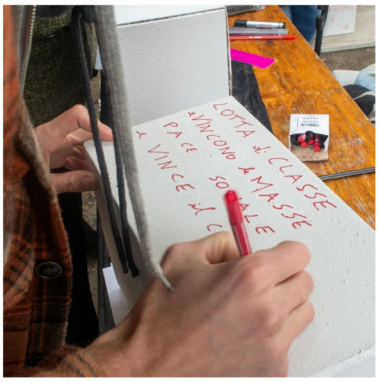
Modes of interaction with the art-work

- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

Modes of instantiation of the art-work

- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.



Typical interaction with the art-work. A person writing their political thoughts with a marker on one side of a white cardboard box provided by the artists (PGI)



Another typical interaction with the art-work. As people write on the surfaces of the cardboard boxes, these are gradually placed on a wooden platform and stacked on top of each other (PGI)



The state of the art-work at the end of the performance day (PGI)

T0
Street festival commission
"Oltre il Ponte - festa partigiana"
(2023)

leads to art-work

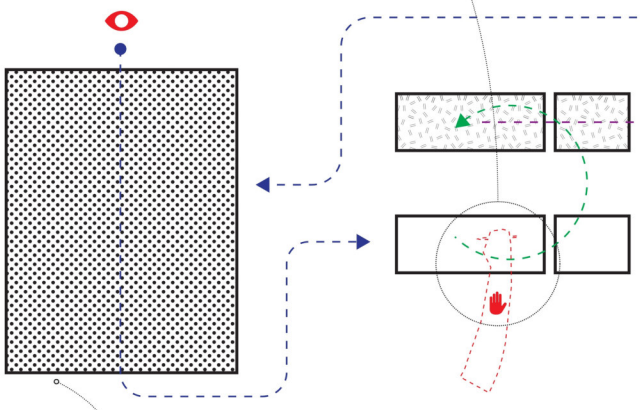
T1
START

Supralocal
Antifascism
Unity
Construction
Memory
Political expression

Local
Battle of Bolognina of 1944 (history)
Bolognina (history)
Writing on walls of Bologna
Bologna (city)
Italian government (2022)

T2
END

T3
START or END



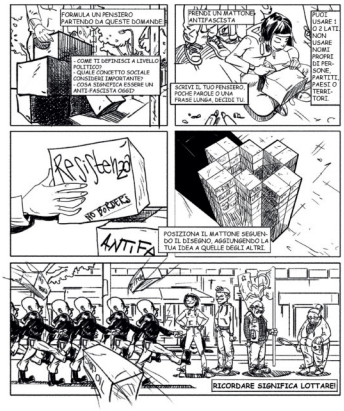
Side views (cardboard box)

Side view

ANTI-MONUMENTO RESISTENTE

Il gioco dei 100 mattoni anti-fascista per costruire una identità politica collettiva

tist



The visual-textual document, presented as a comic, serving as rules for interacting with the art-work, outlining specific actions to be performed (PGI)



One of the artists preparing on-site the hundred cardboard boxes that will make up the art-work (PGI)



Some of the artists applying stucco to join the stacked cardboard boxes with writings on them (PGI)

Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

Modes of interaction with the art-work

- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

Modes of instantiation of the art-work

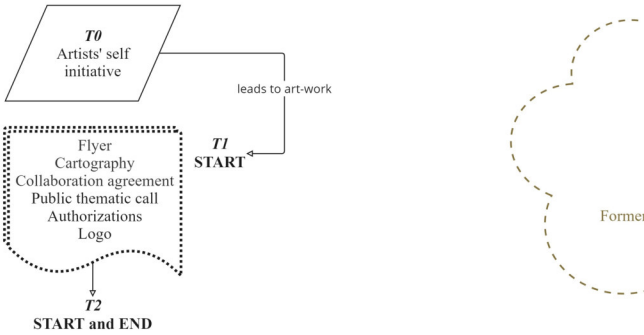
- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

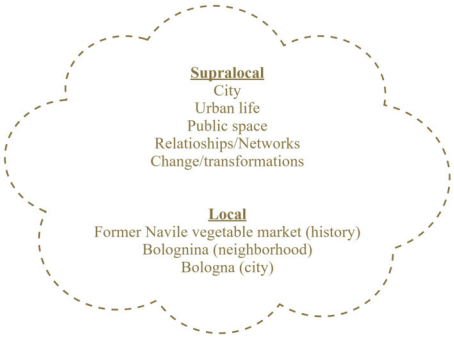
Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.

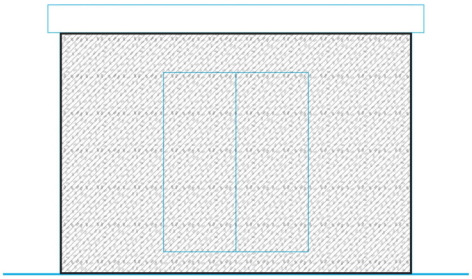


Six of the ten murals painted on the electrical cabins at the Trilogia Navile complex (PGI)

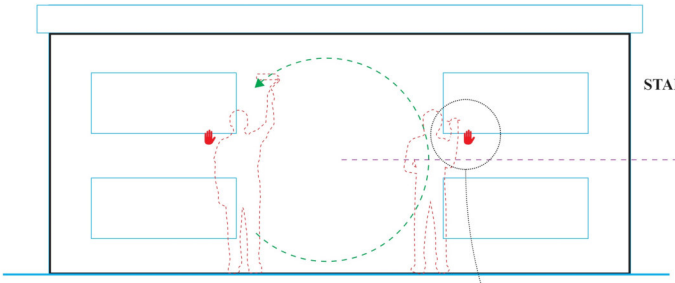




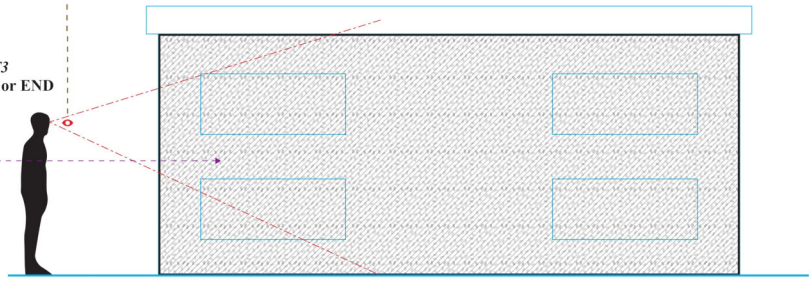




Side view



Front view



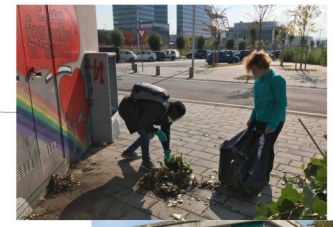
Front view



A 3D satellite map of the Trilogia Navile complex created by the artists and used to locate the electrical cabins where the murals would be painted. (PGI)

disegnare dialoghi

The logo designed by the artists to publicly identify the art-work is inspired by the visual identity of the UAP. It adapts the representation of Bologna's historic center boundaries to the specific site of the art-work, utilizing the area's characteristic color palette (PGI)









Different stages of the art-work's creation. From top to bottom, the figures show the artists, along with asylum seekers, cleaning the site and preparing the surfaces of the electrical cabins.
In the rightmost figure, one of the selected artists is preparing paper stencils to be applied to the electrical cabins (PGI)

Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

Modes of interaction with the art-work

- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

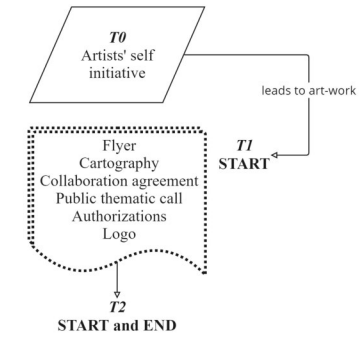
Modes of instantiation of the art-work

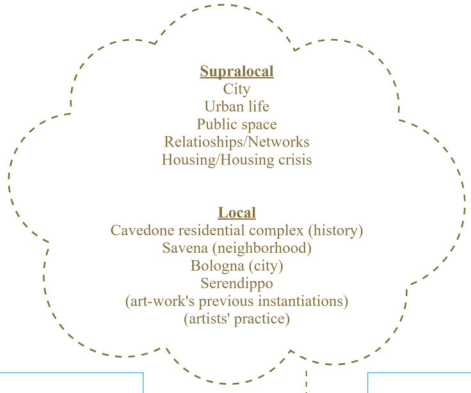
- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

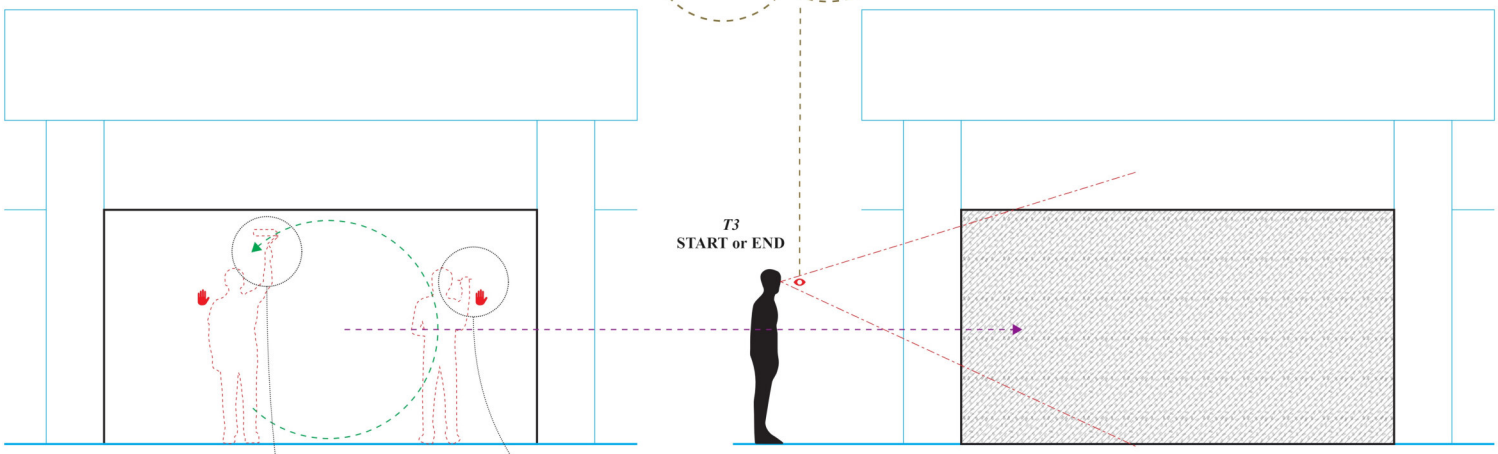
Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.



The figure on the left shows one of the murals painted on the surfaces of the market shutters at the Cavedone residential complex in the Savena district. The figure on the right depicts a typical interaction with the art-work; in this case, people who participated in the art-work's creation and residents of the complex gather to celebrate its completion (PGI)





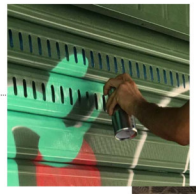


Front view

Front view



Two public walks, integral parts of the art-work along with the murals, which took place at its site, the Cavedone residential complex in the Savena district (PGI)



Detail of the painting intervention on the market shutters (PGI)







From left to right, the figures show two main stages in the creation of the art-work. Asylum seekers repaint the surfaces of the market shutters at the Cavedone complex with green paint, preparing them for the subsequent mural to be created by one of the artists (PGI)

Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

Modes of interaction with the art-work

- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

Modes of instantiation of the art-work

- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.





A typical interaction with the art-work, installed on the transparent right and left panels of one of the many TPer bus stops (PGI)

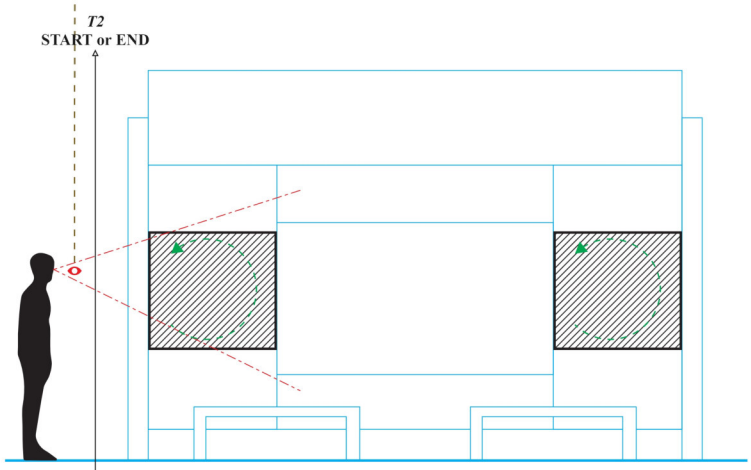




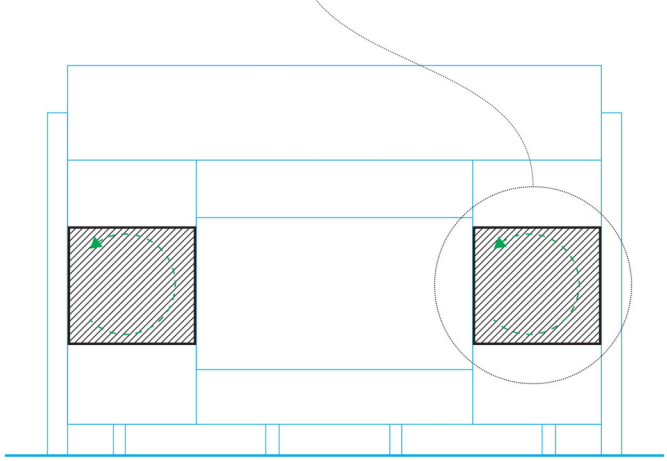
Three details of the various versions of the art-work instantiation on the TPer bus stops (PGI)

Supralocal
City
Urban life
Public space
Major historical events
Advertisements
Mobility

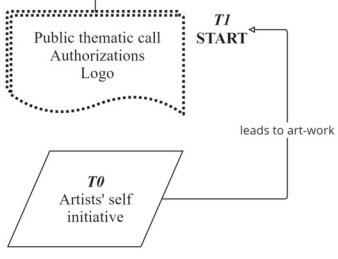
Local
Bologna Massacre of August 2, 1980 (history, terrorism)
Bologna central trainstation (history)
Bologna (city)



Front view



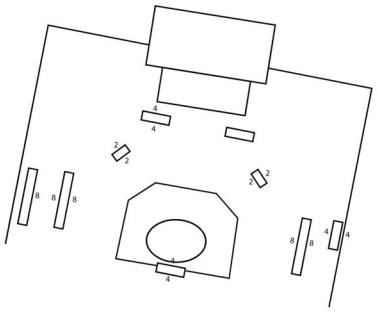
Rear view







Two versions of the logo designed by the artists to publicly identify the art-work. The logo is inspired by the visual identity of the UAP. It adapts the representation of Bologna's historic center boundaries to the specific theme of the public thematic call (PGI)



PIAZZA MEDAGLIE D'ORO TOTALE 72 (90X90)

LINEA 28 = ATTRAVERSO 98 (90X90) +7 (50X50)
00 Indipendenza s. pietro 50x50 2
01 UGO BASSI 50X50 2
02 MARCONI 8
03 PIAZZA DEI MARTIRI 8
04 MILLE 12
05 SFERISTERIO 8
06 IRNERIO 12
07 PORTA SAN DONATO 24
08 SANT'EGIDIO 4
09 MERCATO SAN DONATO 2
10 REPUBBLICA 4
11 NOVELLI 4
12 SERENA 50X50 1
13 FIERA ALDO MORO 8
14 PALAZZO CONGRESSI 4 NO
15 VIII AGOSTO 50X50 2

VIA INDIPENDENZA 44 (90X90)
AUTOSTAZIONE 24
PORTA GALLIERA 12
SAN PIETRO 8

A layout plan created by the artists, used to organize the installation of the art-work on the TPer bus stops in Piazza delle Medaglie d'Oro, at the main entrance of Bologna's central train station (PGI)

Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

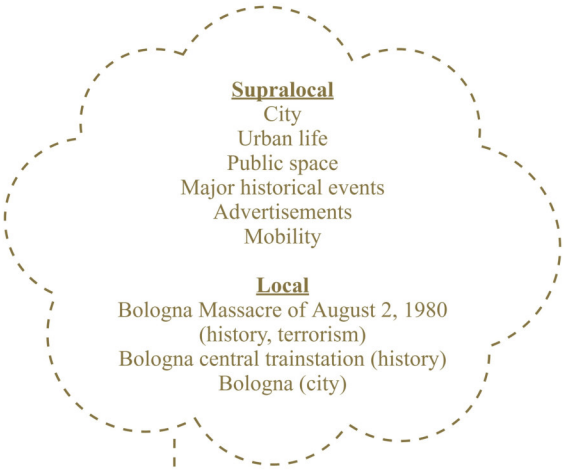
Modes of interaction with the art-work

- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

Modes of instantiation of the art-work

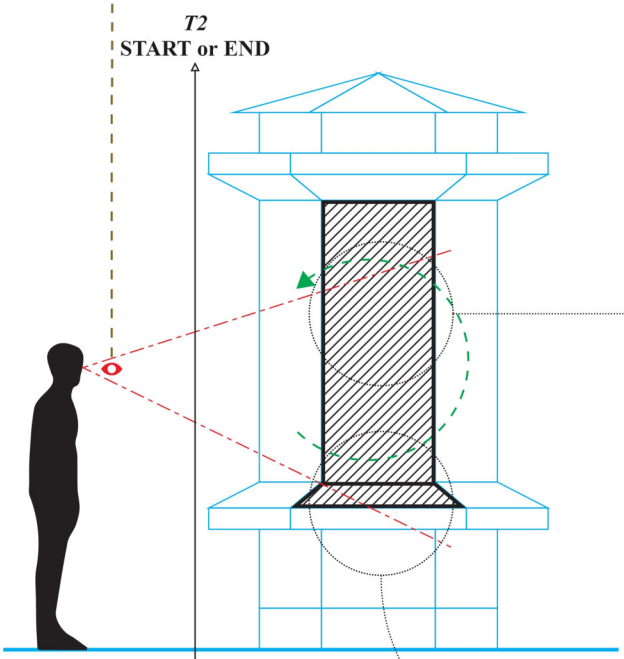
- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.

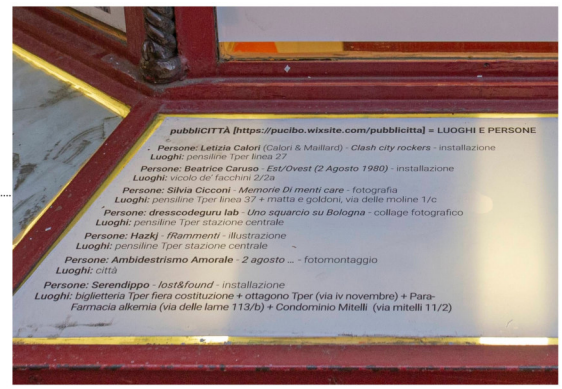




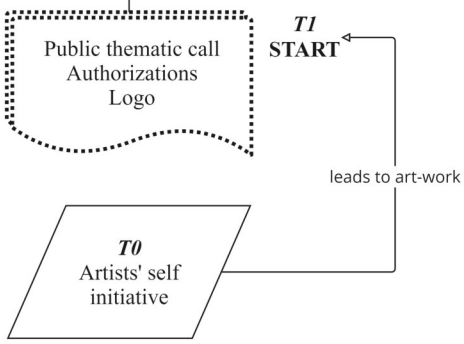
The version of the art-work instantiation in the form of backlit rectangular and trapezoidal panels installed in the octagonal kiosk on Via IV Novembre (PGI)







Two details of the art-work. In the top figure, the backlit panel displaying a collage. In the bottom figure, the trapezoidal backlit panel providing information about other locations in the city where different versions of the art-work instantiations can be found (PGI)



Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
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- Immaterial site

Modes of interaction with the art-work

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- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
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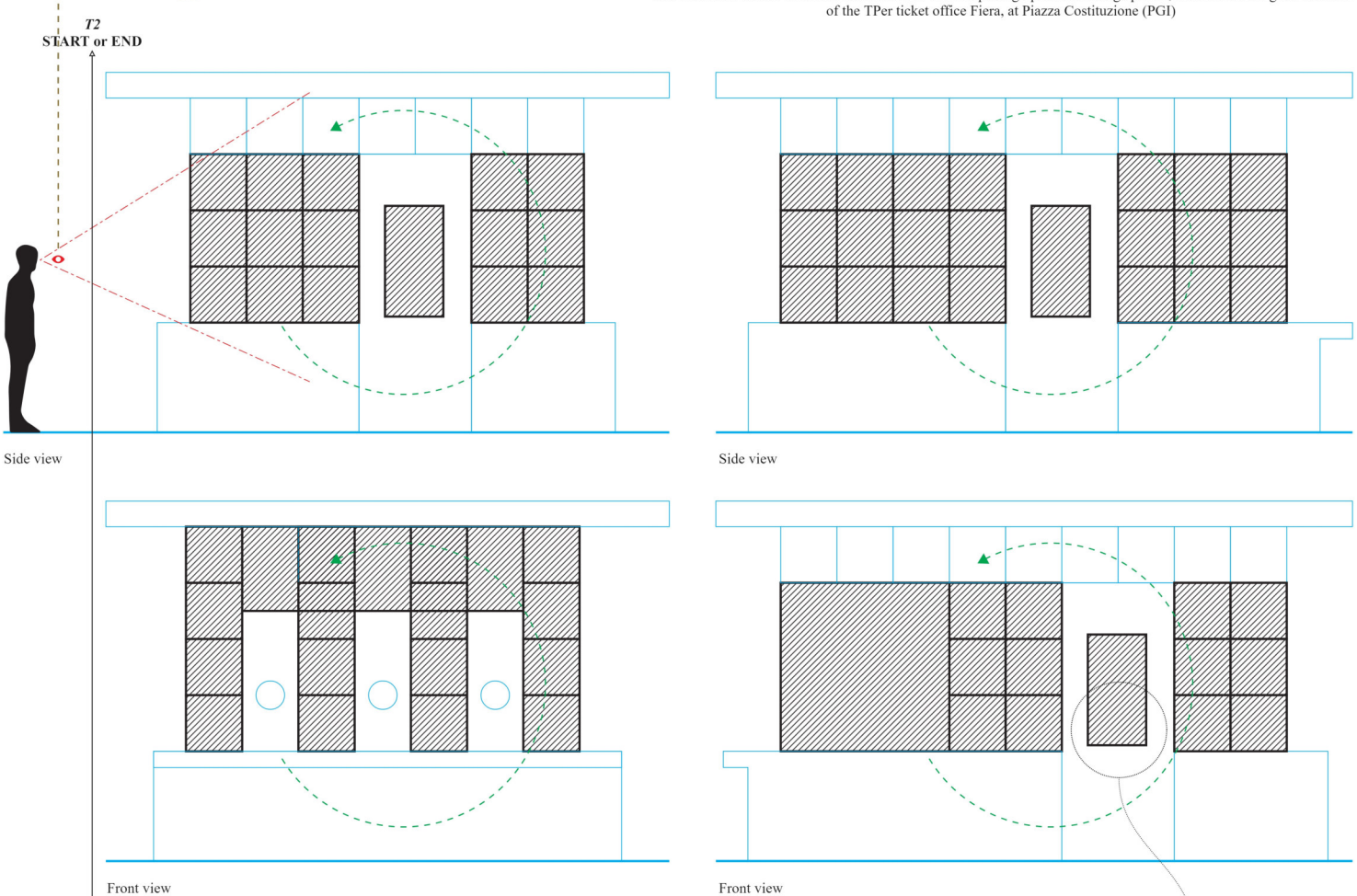
Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.

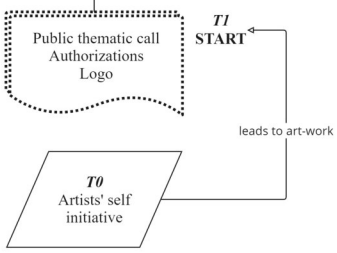


The version of the art-work instantiation in the form of photographic and collage panels, installed on the glass surfaces of the TPer ticket office Fiera, at Piazza Costituzione (PGI)

Supralocal
City
Urban life
Public space
Major historical events
Advertisements
Mobility

Local
Bologna Massacre of August 2, 1980 (history, terrorism)
Bologna central trainstation (history)
Bologna (city)







Two details of the art-work. The photographic and collage panels installed on the glass surfaces of the ticket office. The only panel not installed on the glass surfaces is a panel with text providing information about other locations in the city where different versions of the art-work instantiations can be found(PGI)

Condition of art-work/site complex
- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

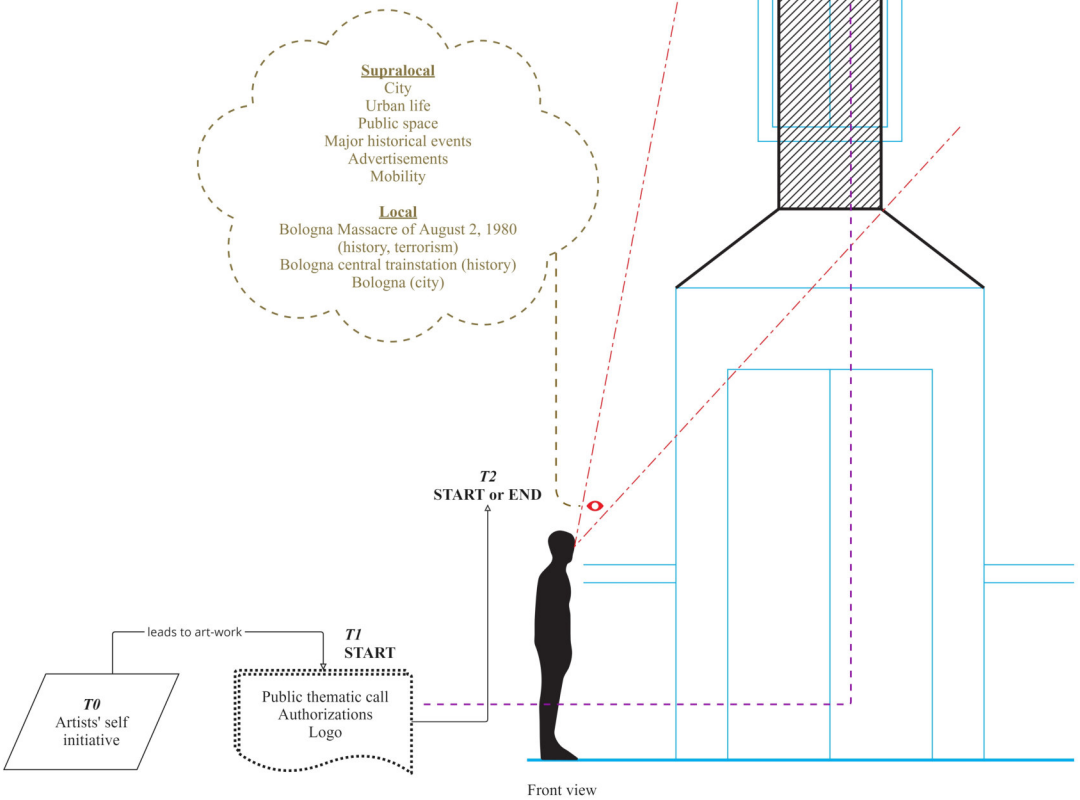
Modes of interaction with the art-work
- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

Modes of instantiation of the art-work
- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.



The version of the art-work's instantiation in the form of a rectangular PVC banner, hung and stretched from the window of the artists' residence in the Bolognina neighborhood (PGI)



Front view

Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

Modes of interaction with the art-work

- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

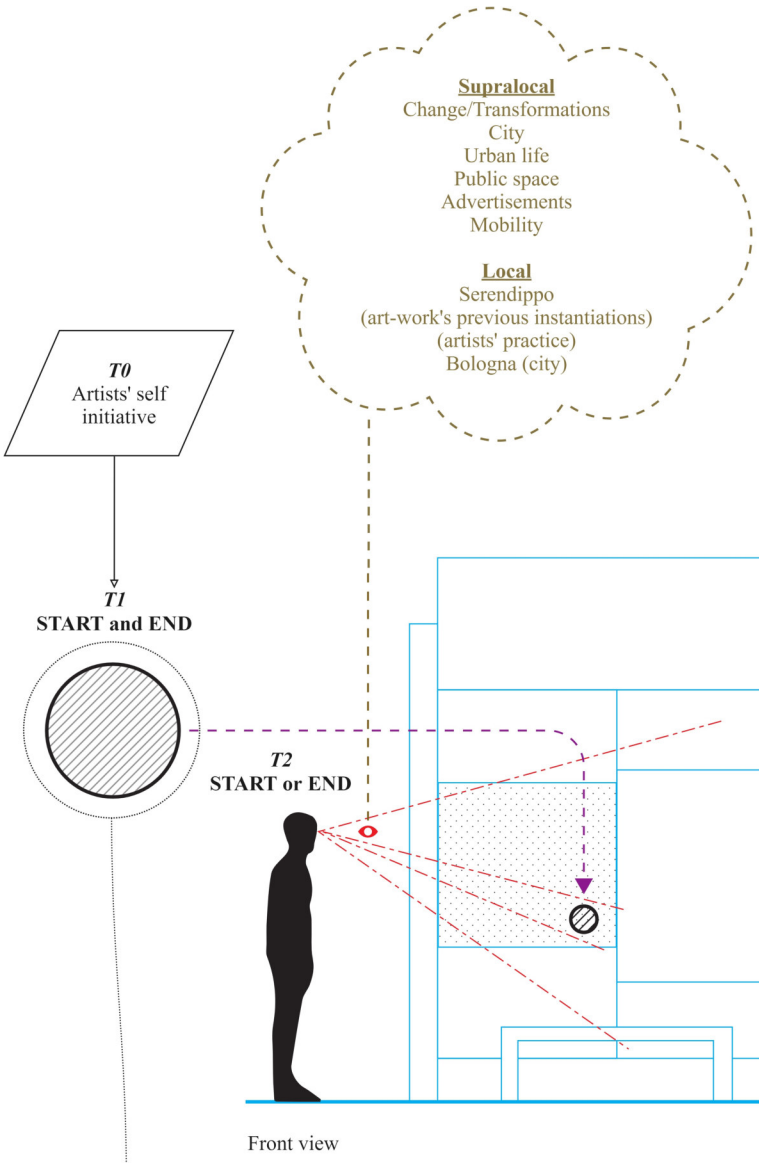
Modes of instantiation of the art-work

- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.



A typical interaction with the art-work at its site, the TPer bus stops (PGI)





A part of the art-work instantiation: the yellow sticker featuring the art-work's logo, adapted to reflect its theme (PGI)



One of the artists applying the yellow sticker on a previous installation of the art-work at a TPer bus stop (PGI)



Detail of the overall art-work instantiation, consisting of a previous instantiation combined with a yellow sticker applied at the bottom right corner, next to the QR code that links to the UAP website (PGI)

Condition of art-work/site complex

- Sanctioned art-work area
- Instantiated art-work
- Evidence of interaction on art-work
- Art-work's previous instantiation
- Material site
- Immaterial site

Modes of interaction with the art-work

- Sanctioned interaction rules
- Indirect interaction with the art-work
- Direct interaction with the art-work

Modes of instantiation of the art-work

- Instantiation by reference
- Instantiation by addition/extension
- Instantiation by movement/state change
- *Tn* Temporal progression of the art-work

Drawing not to scale; person silhouette provided for reference.

MODULO DI CONSENSO INFORMATO PER PARTECIPAZIONE AD ATTIVITÀ DI RICERCA
ai sensi dell'art. 13 del Regolamento (UE) 2016/679

Titolo dello studio:	**Artistic Practices and City Transformations: How City Changes Impacts the Logics and Modes of Urban Artistic Practice**
Sponsor(s):	Alma Mater Studiorum- Università di Bologna DA - Department of Architecture
Research Investigator:	Enrico Chinellato (PhD Student/Dottorando) +39 342 193 5695 enrico.chinellato2@unibo.it https://www.unibo.it/sitoweb/enrico.chinellato2/en DA – Department of Architecture Viale del Risorgimento 2 - 40126, Bologna - Italy

1.0 Introduzione

Le viene chiesto di partecipare a uno studio di ricerca (ricerca di dottorato). La sua partecipazione è volontaria. Se sceglie di partecipare, può decidere di revocare il suo consenso in qualsiasi momento. È invitato/a a partecipare a questo studio in quanto artista, curatore o rappresentate d'associazione culturale con sede in uno dei siti di ricerca oggetto di questo studio. Questo modulo di consenso le fornisce informazioni per aiutarla a fare una scelta informata rispetto alla sua partecipazione a questo studio. È pregato/a di leggere attentamente questo documento e di porre ogni sua eventuale domanda. Tutte le sue domande dovrebbero ricevere una risposta soddisfacente prima di decidere se partecipare a questo studio. Se sceglie di partecipare a questo studio, le verrà chiesto di firmare questo modulo di consenso, confermando che lo studio le è stato spiegato, tutte le sue domande hanno ricevuto risposta e che lei acconsente a partecipare. Non ci sono conflitti di interesse da dichiarare in relazione a questo studio.

2.0 Scopo

Lo scopo di questo studio è sviluppare una maggiore comprensione di come gli artisti interpretano e descrivono la loro arte e le loro azioni, in relazione al cambiamento urbano; e di esplorare se la loro interpretazione del cambiamento dei luoghi della loro azione nella città influenzi la realizzazione delle loro opere d'arte. Lo studio raccoglierà e analizzerà dati visuali e testuali relativi ad un sito ricerca, ovvero la città di Bologna – Italia. I dati saranno raccolti tramite interviste semi-strutturate, etnografia visuale e osservazioni partecipanti con artisti locali, curatori e rappresentanti di associazioni culturali, che specificheranno micro-siti di ricerca (i siti della loro pratica) all'interno della città. Lo studio cerca di contribuire ad una maggiore comprensione della natura e del ruolo del fare arte negli spazi cittadini, del suo rapporto con le trasformazioni della città, nonché del più ampio incontro tra pratica artistica e spazio urbano. Attualmente, i risultati di questo studio sono finalizzati alla sola ricerca accademica e sono strettamente correlati al Dottorato di ricerca del Research Investigator, Enrico Chinellato.

3.0 Attività di ricerca

Si prevede che circa 17 persone parteciperanno a questo studio. Questo studio avrà una durata totale di tre anni (ricerca di dottorato della durata di tre anni). Le attività a Bologna - Italia dovrebbero terminare entro febbraio 2024. I risultati finali dello studio dovrebbero essere noti intorno agli anni 2024/2025.

3.1 Intervista semi-strutturata

Potrebbe aver già partecipato a questa attività, fornendo il suo consenso alla partecipazione. In tal caso, la preghiamo di fare riferimento al punto 11.0 per questioni relative al consenso per la de-anonimizzazione dei dati.

Dopo aver firmato questo modulo, le verrà chiesto di partecipare ad un massimo di una intervista. Durante questa intervista parlerà con il Research Investigator, Enrico Chinellato. L'intervista avrà una durata di circa 1,30 – 2,00 ore e si svolgerà possibilmente presso la sede del suo studio/associazione. Altre sedi potrebbero essere decise previo avviso. L'intervista sarà audio-registrata e verrà prodotta una trascrizione. Le verrà inviata la trascrizione e le verrà data l'opportunità di correggere eventuali errori relativi al contenuto fattuale della stessa. La trascrizione dell'intervista sarà analizzata dal Research Investigator, Enrico Chinellato. L'accesso alla trascrizione dell'intervista sarà limitato al Research Investigator e ai colleghi e ricercatori con i quali potrebbe collaborare nell'ambito del processo di ricerca.
Qualsiasi contenuto riepilogativo dell'intervista, o citazione diretta dall'intervista, reso disponibile tramite pubblicazioni accademiche o altri outlet accademici sarà trattato come specificato al punto 11.0. La registrazione audio sarà conservata fino a due anni dopo la fine di questo studio e successivamente distrutta.
Durante l'intervista, le verrà chiesto di fornire informazioni su: (1) il background, l'autopercezione, le motivazioni, le posizioni della sua pratica; (2) il legame della sua pratica sia con Bologna che con siti specifici di intervento (sulla base di uno o più interventi specifici che emergeranno come fulcro della discussione), nonché la pertinenza che specifici siti possono avere all'interno del suo lavoro; (3) la sua auto-percepita capacità di azione relativa agli spazi urbani e ai loro cambiamenti nel tempo; (4) la sua auto-percepita efficacia nell'impattare e/o generare cambiamento nello spazio urbano attraverso la sua pratica; (5) la pianificazione e l'esecuzione del/i suo/i intervento/i in siti diversi a Bologna.

3.2 Etnografia visuale

Dopo aver firmato questo modulo, le potrebbe venire chiesto di partecipare da un minimo di una a un massimo di due sessioni di raccolta dati visuali. Durante questa sessione parlerà con il Research Investigator, Enrico Chinellato. La sessione avrà una durata di circa 1,30 – 2,00 ore e si svolgerà possibilmente presso la sede del suo studio/associazione. Altre sedi potrebbero essere decise previo avviso. La sessione raccoglierà, retrospettivamente, materiale visivo da lei creato (su supporti fisici o digitali, come illustrazioni, disegni, immagini, foto, video, etc…) relativo alla creazione della/e sua/e opera/e d'arte, già discussa/e in sede di intervista, al punto 3.1. La sessione sarà inoltre audio-registrata e verrà prodotta una trascrizione. Le verrà inviata la trascrizione e le verrà data l'opportunità di correggere eventuali errori relativi al contenuto fattuale della stessa. Il materiale visivo, come anche la trascrizione della sessione, saranno analizzati dal Research Investigator, Enrico Chinellato. L'accesso al materiale visivo e alla trascrizione sarà limitato al Research Investigator e ai colleghi e ricercatori con i quali potrebbe collaborare nell'ambito del processo di ricerca.
Qualsiasi materiale raccolto durante la sessione, o contenuto riepilogativo della trascrizione, o citazione diretta dalla trascrizione, reso disponibile tramite pubblicazioni accademiche o altri outlet accademici sarà trattato come specificato al punto 11.0. Il materiale raccolto e la registrazione audio saranno conservati fino a due anni dopo la fine di questo studio e successivamente distrutti.

Durante la sessione, le verrà chiesto di ricostruire nel dettaglio, tramite e sulla base della documentazione visiva da lei fornita, il processo creativo relativo alla/e sua/e opera/e d'arte già discussa/e in sede di intervista. Il Research Investigator potrebbe fotografare, registrare in video, o rappresentare graficamente questo materiale nel corso della sessione, o chiederle di fornire copie dello stesso.

3.3 Osservazione partecipante

Potrebbe aver già partecipato a questa attività, fornendo il suo consenso alla partecipazione. In tal caso, la preghiamo di fare riferimento al punto 11.0 per questioni relative al consenso per la de-anonimizzazione dei dati.

Dopo aver firmato questo modulo, le potrebbe essere chiesto di partecipare da un minimo di una a un massimo di tre osservazioni. L'osservazione sarà effettuata dal Research Investigator, Enrico Chinellato. Non è possibile prevedere la durata dell'osservazione in questo momento, tuttavia dovrebbe durare quanto l'evento osservato. Si svolgerà possibilmente presso il sito del suo intervento/pratica, o di interventi/pratiche altre strettamente legate a quest'ultima. Altre sedi potrebbero essere decise previo avviso. L'osservazione sarà documentata attraverso note scritte e diagrammi. Le potrebbe essere chiesto di partecipare alla stesura di questi diagrammi. La documentazione attraverso note scritte e schemi sarà analizzata dal Research Investigator, Enrico Chinellato. L'accesso a questo materiale sarà limitato al Research Investigator e ai colleghi e ricercatori con i quali potrebbe collaborare nell'ambito del processo di ricerca.
Se rilevante, qualsiasi contenuto riassuntivo, o citazione diretta dalle note scritte, reso disponibile tramite pubblicazioni accademiche o altri outlet accademici sarà trattato come specificato al punto 11.0.
Durante l'osservazione, che si concentrerà strettamente su Bologna e dipenderà dalla natura della sua pratica artistica, il Research Investigator cercherà di osservare e documentare: (1) come lei (o altri membri legati alla sua pratica) elabora un intervento/pratica relativa allo spazio urbano, principalmente in termini di processo creativo; (2) come lei (o altri membri collegati alla sua pratica) intende realizzare un intervento/pratica relativo allo spazio urbano precedentemente pianificato; (3) come lei (o altri membri collegati alla sua pratica) esegue/performa un intervento/pratica relativo allo spazio urbano precedentemente pianificato in un sito urbano di sua scelta. Il Research Investigator cercherà di ridurre al minimo la sua interferenza in uno qualsiasi dei suddetti processi e parteciperà come osservatore interno, discutendo con lei il loro sviluppo al termine dell'osservazione.

4.0 Responsabilità del partecipante

Se acconsente a partecipare a questo studio, il suo coinvolgimento durerà circa 6 mesi, a seconda dell'attività di studio. Si specifica che i sei mesi di coinvolgimento non richiedono una sua partecipazione attiva e costante, ma sono da intendersi come una disponibilità per le specifiche attività di studio di cui alla sezione 3.0 e seguenti, le quali saranno concordate con lei con consono anticipo.

5.0 Potenziali rischi

Potrebbe sentirsi a disagio mentre parla delle sue esperienze. Può rifiutarsi di rispondere alle domande o lasciare l'intervista, la sessione di raccolta materiale visivo, o l'osservazione in qualsiasi momento.

6.0 Finanziamento e sponsorship

L'Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna, DA – Dipartimento di Architettura finanzia questo studio di ricerca come ricerca dottorale, compreso il pagamento al Research Investigator riportato a pagina 1 del presente modulo.

7.0 Compensi

Non sarà finanziariamente responsabile per eventuali costi associati alle attività di studio o alla ricerca nel suo complesso. Non riceverà un compenso per partecipare alle attività di studio.

8.0 Contatti

Questo studio è stato esaminato e approvato dall'Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna, DA Dipartimento di Architettura, Collegio dei Docenti. Può porre domande su questo studio in qualsiasi momento. In caso di dubbi o reclami riguardanti lo studio, si prega di contattare il Research Investigator al numero di telefono riportato a pagina 1 di questo modulo.
È inoltre possibile contattare il supervisor del Research Investigator, Prof. Giovanni Leoni.

Prof. Giovanni Leoni (Università di Bologna, DA – Department of Architecture)
+39 051 20 9 3155
giovanni.leoni@unibo.it
https://www.unibo.it/sitoweb/giovanni.leoni/en

9.0 Terminazione della partecipazione

Parteciperà allo studio volontariamente. Può ritirarsi dallo studio in qualsiasi momento. La sua decisione non la influenzerà in alcun modo, né ora né in futuro, e non ci sarà alcuna penale. Se decide di ritirarsi dallo studio, informi il Research Investigator. Le informazioni raccolte fino al momento in cui si ritira dallo studio possono ancora essere utilizzate nella misura consentita dalla legge applicabile, ma non verranno raccolte nuove informazioni. Il Research Investigator può rimuoverla dallo studio in qualsiasi momento, anche se desidera rimanere nello studio. Ciò potrebbe accadere se:

- Il Research Investigator ritiene che sia meglio che lei smetta di partecipare allo studio;
- Non segue le indicazioni che ha ricevuto sullo studio, qui contenute;
- L'Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna interrompe lo studio per qualsiasi motivo;

10.0 Riservatezza

Se decide di partecipare a questo studio, il ricercatore raccoglierà solo le informazioni di cui ha bisogno per questo studio. Le registrazioni e il materiale che la identificano saranno mantenuti riservati e, nella misura consentita dalle leggi applicabili, non saranno divulgati o resi pubblicamente disponibili, salvo quanto descritto nel presente documento di consenso.

11.0 Trattamento dei dati e variazioni al precedente CI in materia di anonimizzazione

In precedenza, lei potrebbe aver acconsentito a partecipare a questo studio in forma anonima. Tuttavia, il Research Investigator sta attualmente considerando la possibilità di de-anonimizzare i dati raccolti, dal momento che lo studio, nella sua versione più recente, includerà anche contenuti visivi relativi alla sua pratica artistica, nonché intenderà fare riferimento esplicito alle sue opere d'arte, a mezzo del loro titolo. Tale materiale sarà a lei accreditato, ove non prodotto dal Research Investigator. La de-anonimizzazione comporta la rivelazione delle identità dei partecipanti associate ai loro dati. Se acconsente, i suoi dati precedentemente anonimizzati saranno resi identificabili in pubblicazioni accademiche o altri outlet accademici.
Può decidere di mantenere l'anonimato, o richiederne garanzia tramite l'uso di iniziali, pseudonimo o altra forma da lei indicata direttamente al Research Investigator.

12.0 <u>Diritti del partecipante</u>

Le verranno comunicate tempestivamente nuove informazioni che potrebbero essere rilevanti per la sua volontà a rimanere in questo studio. Ha il diritto di essere informato dei risultati di questo studio una volta completato l'intero studio. Fatte salve le limitazioni all'esercizio dei diritti degli interessati di cui agli artt. 2-undecies e 2 duodecies del Codice in materia di protezione dei dati personali (D.Lgs. 196/03), Lei, in qualità di partecipante alla ricerca e dunque di interessato, può esercitare i diritti riconosciuti ai sensi e nei limiti degli artt. 15-21 del Regolamento (UE) 2016/679, tra cui il diritto di chiedere l'accesso ai propri dati personali, la rettifica o la cancellazione degli stessi, nonché la limitazione del trattamento dei dati che lo riguardano, l'opposizione al trattamento e la portabilità dei dati. Le sarà data una copia di questo modulo di consenso firmato e datato prima di partecipare a questo studio.

13.0 <u>Consenso alla partecipazione</u>

Ho letto questo modulo e ho potuto porre domande su questo studio. Il Research Investigator, Enrico Chinellato, mi ha spiegato chiaramente questo studio. Ha risposto a tutte le mie domande.
Accetto volontariamente di partecipare a questo studio.
Accetto l'uso dei miei dati strettamente correlati a questo studio, come descritto sopra.
Riceverò una copia firmata di questo modulo di consenso per i miei archivi.
Rispetto alla de-anonimizzazione dei dati, io:

☐ Acconsento alla de-anonimizzazione dei miei dati.

☐ Non acconsento alla de-anonimizzazione dei miei dati. Anonimato tramite _____

_____

Nome e Cognome del Partecipante

_____ _____

Firma del Partecipante Data

Ho spiegato questo studio al partecipante. Ho discusso il suo scopo, le sue procedure, i possibili rischi e benefici e la natura volontaria della partecipazione. Ho invitato il partecipante a porre domande e ho risposto a tutte le domande che l'interessato ha posto. Ho consegnato al partecipante una copia firmata di questo modulo.

ENRICO CHINELLATO

_____

Nome e Cognome del Research Investigator

_____ _____

Firma del Research Investigator Data