



**UXUC**

Interaction Design,  
**User Experience &  
Urban Creativity  
Scientific Journal**

Decoding the DNA of urban spaces  
with artistic practices and creative  
research approaches

Vol. 5 / N° 1

**Urbancreativity.org**

Title:

User Experience & Urban Creativity  
Scientific Journal

Decoding the DNA of urban spaces  
with artistic practices and creative research approaches

Issue Editor:

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Editor-in-chief and Publisher:

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[Urbancreativity.org](http://Urbancreativity.org)

ISSN (print) - 2184-6189

ISSN (online) - 2184-8149

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Authors and Editors - Lisbon 2023

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## Performative Research – Research as Performance: The Performative as an Approach to Urban Studies Across Disciplines

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### Abstract

As performative approaches to urban studies and urban transformation have continuously gained influence in recent years, this journal issue aims at charting new ways towards methodological pluralism and multidisciplinary research from a perspective of performativity. In this context, research is understood as a performative act creating outcomes and performing knowledge in multiple research media. The performative as a conceptual term also reunites arts-based, artistic, and traditional research approaches, closing the gaps created by an orthodox understanding of scientific methodology solely based on quantitative and qualitative methods. Performative research or research as performance, therefore, holds the potential to provide a comprehensive, transdisciplinary understanding of knowledge creation which can reunite a plethora of methods and disciplines under the concept of performativity as the expression and creation of knowledge as a collective, transformative endeavour. The performative and its power to change existing urban realities and collective worldviews ultimately offers a conceptual tool for bringing researchers from different disciplines together and co-developing solutions for current problems together with affected populations. In the context of urban studies, performativity may guide the way towards a participatory understanding of contemporary urbanity and societal co-evolution based on a collective ownership of urban spaces. The contributions to this issue present a methodological toolbox, indicating what performativity may imply in the field of urban studies and which benefits it entails for researchers, engaged citizens, and urbanites.

### Keywords

performativity; performative urbanism; urban studies; arts-based research; artistic research.

### 1. Drinking in Hermann Czech's Bars or Performing the City by Night

Whoever has been going out and enjoying Vienna's nightlife probably has had a good chance of visiting one of Hermann Czech's iconic bars and restaurants in the city centre (see figures 1 and 2). The architect's personal approach to bar design, meanwhile famous for its cave-like, intimate settings, mesmerises viewers, inviting them to dive deeper into the Viennese night (Kuß, 2018). Nevertheless, one of his most iconic projects, the restaurant in the basement of Vienna's Palais Schwarzenberg, meanwhile sits rotting, unused and forgotten, after the building has been closed off for visitors. After the restaurant in Palais Schwarzenberg had been lying dormant for many years, Czech claimed:

And now the spaces [of the restaurant] have been unused for almost ten years, have not been maintained and remain desolate and neglected. The years that have passed and general neglect meanwhile create an *Atmosphere* of a double distance in time, as these spaces are now fulfil a different purpose.

*Atmosphere*, in general, cannot be reproduced; it arises unintentionally and unexpectedly (Czech, 2014, transl. by author).

While the architectural design process usually focuses on forms and functions as well as on the associations and inspirations of the architect and his/her team, the resulting atmosphere can be intended, but is finally determined by the specific use of the space set against the passage of time, which creates a twofold distance: one that results from its intended or practical use and its influence on perception; the other resulting from a newfound purpose, adding a sec-

ondary (or even tertiary) level of interpretational meaning, overlaying and transforming the first. In other words: these spaces are not only performed by their creators and users; they develop a life on their own—they are performed as much as they are performing (Janson, 2015).



Figure 1. Wunderbar (1975-1976) in Vienna, entrance. Source: photograph by the author.



**Figure 2.** Wunderbar (1975-1976) in Vienna, bar area. Source: photograph by the author.

Similarly, in Czech's famous 'Salzamt'—an intricate performance of space itself—the architect invites visitors to perform the space of the restaurant, immersed in its enchanting atmosphere. Whoever enters the 'Salzamt' first arrives at the bar, a festive yet cosy space, situated at an angle to the dining room, hence obstructing the view to the interior, making the space even more mysterious (see figure 3). The bar's layout imitates the ground plan of St. Peter's cathedral in Rome, with a round bar, followed by a cross-shaped interior service area. Mirrors at the wall and dim light make the space glamorous, yet intimate, and passageways leading to the dining area on the left and right turn the entrance into a micro-maze, inviting the visitor to get lost. Passing to the back, a double row of

low-height light poles leads into an elegant dining room (see figure 4). The floor in the front and back of the dining room is slightly sloped towards the middle so that waiters and guests automatically gain speed when entering the room. With visual clues and architectural gestures, Czech invites users to perform these spaces—voluntarily or not—in front of as well as behind the bar (Kuß, 2018).

In Wolfrum and Brandis's edited volume titled "Performative Urbanism – Generating and Designing Urban Space", author Erika Fischer-Lichte (2015, p. 37) explains that "[v]ia its atmosphere, a person entering a room experiences the space and the things within it as empathically present. [...] He or she



**Figure 3.** Salzamt (1981-1983) in Vienna, bar area. Source: photograph by the author.

does not stand in contrast or outside of the atmosphere; they are enclosed and immersed in it.”

Based on Böhme (1995, p. 33) she further describes atmospheres as ‘spheres of presence’ and notices that:

Spaces are performative in at least two respects. On the one hand, they cannot be understood as an isolated container or merely as a geometrical architectural construction. Rather, they are brought forth as particular spaces through the ways in which people perceive and make use of them, allowing a certain spatiality to emerge. On the other

hand, they are performative insofar as they transform people using them. The transformative power of the performative here works on two levels. Spaces are transformed through the particular ways people use them, while the people entering and using these spaces are in turn transformed by the spaces through the effects of location, proportion, materiality, and atmosphere (Fischer-Lichte, 2015, p. 38).

The performance of space creates a twofold spatial relationship: Spaces are transformed by the people building, using, and perceiving them; on the other hand, they transform their visitors and users, who ingest their atmosphere. Hence, the



Figure 4. Salzamt (1981-1983) in Vienna, dining hall. Source: photograph by the author.

totality of space as realised spatial structure, atmosphere, and spatial practice is the result of multiple layers of performativity, multiple acts and embodiments intersecting in the immediacy of lived environments (Massey, 2005; Lefebvre, 1996). If we recognise an atmosphere as a two-sided performance—someone creating a space, and someone transformed by it—can we say that atmosphere is a medium created by the shared performance of space?

Another Austrian architect, Friedrich Kiesler, famously related spatial cognition, architectural forms, gestures, and spatial practices in a comprehensive framework, which understood the body and the eye as foundational aspects of architecture, realising an absolute emergence of architectural space arising from the senses. From his point of view, to perform space means to experience and embody it, to exist in it while performing it—with all senses engaged. In his oeuvre, Kiesler combined art, architecture, design, and event to create a multifaceted design process that resulted in spectacular outcomes and he understood architecture as a blueprint for a new way of living (Bogner, 1997).

In the words of philosopher John Dewey (1934, p. 35), interaction with art or architecture opens us for ‘having an experience’ in all its sensual, aesthetic, and affective dimensions. In this respect, Czech’s and Kiesler’s architectural designs are invitations to experience spaces in unforeseen ways, inspiring and enchanting us while we perform them. The visitor becomes part of a collective performance of space as shared experience.

## 2. Art, Performance, Space

For her work NUI SIMU (That’s Us, 2010/2023), shown at Salzburg’s Museum der Moderne in 2023, Italian artist Marinella Senatore created a film together with retired Italian mine workers about their work and life in the Sicilian town of Enne. The workers were given space on and off camera for reflecting their shared pasts while imagining their future, creating new skills in a collective process of self-discovery and mutual inspiration. According to the artist, the film was to provide a creative tool for participants to understand collective narratives as a fruitful way of creating shared futures.

Based on the idea of her ‘School of Narrative Dance’, Senatore (2023)

focused on the idea of storytelling as an experience that can be explored choreographically, on non-hierarchical learning, self-training and the creation of an active citizenship through informal education. Nomadic and free of charge, the School takes different forms depending on the spaces it temporarily occupies, and proposes an alternative system of education, based on emancipation, inclusion, and self-cultivation. Movement and story-telling are regarded as common languages through celebrating the vernacular, amateur, and professionally trained gestures of the participants.

Performing in Senatore’s works, participants take part in collective practices of knowledge creation, self-training, and active citizenships, opening a space for reflection, community building, and aesthetic emancipation. The artistic lens, adopted by the artist, almost playfully transcends the limits of disciplinary orthodoxy to create a wholesome understanding of knowledge that is abstract, performative, social, and emotionally engaging at the same time. In this sense, her work can be understood as artistic research, delving into the potentials of knowledge creation as a collective, open-ended, and interactive endeavour.

Parallels to Augusto Boal’s “Theatre of the Oppressed” (2008) are obvious, where participants take multiple roles in self-staged performances, as actors, screenwriters, directors, set designers, etc., working towards theatrical catharsis in a staged setting, while spawning socially produced forms of shared knowledge. Originally conceived as a way for illiterate populations in Peru to express their views via theatre as language, the “Theatre of the Oppressed” developed into a powerful tool for citizen engagement, emancipation, and academic research, e.g., in the case of Johnny Saldaña’s Ethnotheatre (2011). Based on Paulo Freire’s concept of the “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” (2005), the co-creation of knowledge and the inversion or elimination of the student/teacher divide can overcome the unidirectional transmission of knowledge, reduce the knowledge/power distance that

implies a divide between knowledge creating bodies and the 'common' people, and open pathways for the collective negotiation of systems of knowledge as well as principles of truth.

In Francisco Boal's theatre settings, Johnny Saldaña's Ethnotheatre as well as Marinella Sentatore's School of Narrative Dance, knowledge, in an abstract and practical sense, is bound to performance in a socially mediated space that includes embodiment, perception, and abstract thought. Vice versa, performative approaches to knowledge creation aim at the transformation of spatialised (and spatialising) systems of knowledge, when speech acts, spatial practices, or abstract concepts and thoughts infiltrate spatialised matrices of sensemaking. In other words: "Our actions create a space and allow it to emerge as a particular version of it" (Fischer-Lichte, 2015, p. 35). We can understand these versions in abstract terms or as spatialised systems of knowledge, to be addressed in collective performances of reflection, learning, and personal transformation.

Alan Kaprow's (1993) Happenings can be understood as an example for loose and at the same time immediate connections between the spatial performance, instructions for spatial action, and spatial practice. Providing a loose description for an unfolding spatial performance and/or a dynamic setting of moving elements in space, actions of participants and onlookers unfold freely in the space of a Happening. Free of behavioural rules, an immediate and immersive performative structure arises that defies expectations, giving participants an active role in playfully creating the space of a Happening from the interplay of objects, people, and movement. Performativity, in this case, provides the utmost level of freedom for a creative unfolding of collective spatiality, while a performative space is created in situ as an interactive, momentary, and intuitive assemblage. Happenings highlight the role of space as creative matter for interactively establishing relations to our surroundings, while explaining how performativity is linked to the establishment of collective forms of spatiality—in art and otherwise.

The examples listed above exemplify how spatial systems of order, socially and institutionally constructed knowledge, and spatial performance can be employed to create or trans-

form worldviews, while allowing involved persons to realise their potential for addressing and changing the world they live in. Performativity, in this sense, can be a tool for societal transformation and knowledge creation at the same time.

### 3. From Practicing to Writing (about) Urban Spaces

In her seminal text, Benita Luckmann (1970) describes the "The Small Life-Worlds of Modern Man" that people create around them, allowing them to live in meaningful and manageable micro-environments with clear and comprehensible structures, including areas of work, play, love, sports, etc. Conversely, these life worlds are understood as enacted environments that depend on the active or passive performativity of their 'inhabitants', who serve as (co-)creators, decision-makers, censors, and actors at the same time. Enactment, performativity, shared belief systems, as well as the spaces and atmospheres they create, seem to be different sides of the same dice, relating sensemaking to sensible environments (Urry, 2003).

Similarly, the writings of William H. Whyte (1980; 1993) point to the entanglement of social conditions of everyday life with their enactment in and through space. Here, everyday environments and spatial practices serve as references for researching social structures expressed via spatial performativity. In "The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces" (1980), space can be interpreted as matrix of multi-layered performances that include the city's building departments, construction companies, construction workers as well as users and inhabitants of urban spaces.

In "Outline of a Theory of Practice" (1980), Pierre Bourdieu described the performance of space in Kabyle communities in French occupied territory, deducing patterns of everyday practices reflected in spatial forms and structures, e.g., the Kabyle house. Structures, signs, and significations of space seem to converge here, opening the spaces of the Kabyle house as a matter for research. While the performance of everyday spaces determines the interior structure of the house and was also related to wider Kabyle society, it is Bourdieu's abstract description of space that allows us to enter his space of academic reflection, at the same time conceptual, performative, and tied to spatial practice. Space appears as

a multi-layered, multi-dimensional performance of multiple actors, expressed in visual and textual media, opening interstitial spaces for thought, while creating an understanding of human life-worlds through the reflection of socio-spatial patterns.

In an urban context, Atelier Bow Wow (Tsukamoto et al., 2000) have used visual representations of space as a tool to research urban spatial structures in drawing, documenting relations between spatial environments and functions of space. In a multimodal exploration of spatial realities, the researchers/artists use drawing as a shared spatial language to analyse spatial assemblages, contributing new perspectives on spatial realities and the performativity of urban spaces. In other words, they re-frame space in drawing to discover new openings for learning and talking about urban spatial relationships as an expression of (inter-)changeable realities.

Translating this seemingly simple knowledge back into the realm of sociology and scientific methodology, Law and Urry (2004, p. 3) wrote:

So what of research methods? Our argument is that these are performative. By this we mean that they have effects; they make differences; they enact realities; and they can help to bring into being what they also discover.

The performativity of scientific methods, just like artistic practice, not only affects its objects, its audiences, or its creators: Science and scientific results are ultimately enacted and transferred via multiple relational media, describing and contextualising collective systems of knowledge. They present knowledge as a complex assemblage of relational systems of implied meaning in contextualised performances, read against one or many frames of reference or rationales. Scientific research methods, therefore, perform scientific results, as much as art, design, or architecture create tangible works for contemplation; audiences, academic or otherwise, subsequently negotiate what counts as real. There is no fleeing our collective performance of (spatial) reality, only different forms of participation.

Similarly, Tuan (1991) emphasized the role of language in bestowing meaning upon places, recognising places of spatial reference as co-created by language, also in scientific discourse. These places then become elements in a chain of relational meanings. Just as 'Mount Prospect' becomes endowed with special significance in Tuan's (1991, p. 684) article, we can add real places and their spatial significance to the chain of signs and symbols, which are instrumental in creating the world through language. By establishing and iteratively transforming contexts of meaning (Derrida, 2008), we not only create meaningful life-worlds in language and in real life, but we also make them understandable and accessible through words, thoughts, and scientific concepts.

Languages as performative systems of expression ultimately relate to space and spatiality, creating new meanings and charting new horizons, establishing relations between objects in space as well as between collective and individual spatial perspectives. These systems are therefore never fixed but fluidly related to one another, while subject to constant reconfiguration. Hence, scientific concepts can be understood as performative systems of spatial relationality, creating their objects of interest, while establishing, and (re-structuring) relations between researched phenomena and their socio-spatial contexts. Referring to Umberto Eco (1989), just like an artwork, conceptions of the urban can be understood as an 'open work': continuously adapted by collective sensemaking, individual perception, and our desire to create meaningful environments, turning lived spatiality into a collective performance, while transforming physical realities.

#### **4. Performative Research, Arts-based Research, and Experience**

In his seminal text "The Performative Manifesto", Brad Hase-man (2006) described in detail how the idea of performative research could potentially close the gap between qualitative and quantitative research, and open scientific research to contributions from the arts, design, or architecture. By understanding works of design, art, or built structures as outcomes of research, they become elements in a continuous process of sensemaking and knowledge creation. Similar to 'performative utterances', described by J.L. Austin (1975),

they embody research results and influence discourse as much as meticulously conceived theories and concepts. The concept of 'the performative' is therefore extended from the world of language to include non-textual means of expression, forming part of a continuous process of creating and transforming scientific meaning. In addition, creative, arts-based, or artistic outcomes of performative research often include an aesthetic dimension that radically broadens the possibilities of what can be communicated in research. From an arts-based research perspective, these embodied and performative aspects of scientific discourse go beyond the mere discursive description of research results and enable recipients to experience research with all their senses, sparking new insights, new forms of knowledge, and new ways of seeing the world (Barone and Eisner, 2012).

In his definition of 'the performative', Haseman (2006, p. 102) builds on Austin's speech-act theory (1975), in which a 'performative utterance' accomplishes what is expressed merely by verbal expression, such as saying 'Yes, I do' in a marriage ceremony or 'I declare the defendant guilty' in court. A text, a painting, a building, or a song, therefore, can infiltrate and impact scientific research contexts, while creating a broader understanding of what is possible, attainable, or sensible in research. Similar to Feyerabend's (1993, p. 14) claim for methodological openness, it is not only a question whether indeed "anything goes", but also of what can be expressed, to whom, and how. Hence, different forms of expression and different media can imply multiple things in a research context, and it is up to researchers, participants, and recipients to figure out what they mean and how they impact collective realities.

Haseman (2006, p. 103) also refers to the importance of 'practice' in the context of performative research: "The 'practice' in 'practice-led research' is primary — it is not an optional extra; it is the necessary pre-condition of engagement in performative research." Without practice, no performative research and, hence, no performative impact. Conversely, research impact becomes a precondition for performative research and scientific methods are opened to a plethora of practice-led, arts- and design-based, creative, and artistic approaches that widen the spectrum of possibilities, effects, and performative outcomes of research. In this sense, the

contributions to this journal issue can also be understood as performative utterances: They translate research settings into writing to bear witness to performative aspects of space, which can alter our understanding of urban spaces, their meanings, and their inherent properties. Consequently, spatial performance (in real or abstract terms) is key to continuously transforming urban spaces, letting us all take part in the collective performance of the urban.

If we extend Barone and Eisner's (2012) claims of arts-based research to performative research—to broaden research perspectives, to open research approaches to creativity and a multiplicity of outcomes, and to enable recipients to see, feel, taste, smell, or hear what they were unable to realise before—both performative research and arts-based research have the similar goal of reducing conceptual and methodological divides, while creating a collective and open-ended conception of research that can be artistic, scientific, practice-led, intuitive, discursive, and performative at the same time. Performative research, in this sense, must be understood as a collective endeavour: It creates spaces of reflection while impacting collective understandings of its goals and objectives. Performative research, therefore, transforms the world around us while generating new forms of knowledge that transcend purely academic discourse.

Boal's (2008) theatre of the oppressed or Saldaña's (2011) Ethnotheatre are perfect examples for this: performances address lived realities while transforming their meaning instantly. They express perspectives, thoughts, and emotions while sparking responses in the audience. The world cannot be the same afterwards—space demands performativity as an embodiment of collective reality. Performativity, in another sense, enables us to relate to life and its spaces in a meaningful way. We perform space according to collective systems of reasoning and referring to spatial surroundings, which are *understood to be meaningful* in collective performances of 'the real' (Ho et al., 2018). Dewey's (1934) notion of artistic experience provides a possibility for framing interactions with the world in aesthetic terms and, by involving multiple senses in research designs and research processes, we may thus broaden understandings of what research can imply and how it can be communicated.

## 5. Current Approaches to Urban Studies – the Performative and the Urban

The performance of urban spaces works on multiple levels. From a perspective of planetary urbanism, 'the right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1996) belongs to everyone who is involved in collective urbanisation processes that stretch to the farthest edges of the globe (Brenner and Schmid, 2021). This also implies that we are all urban citizens and that we are part of a collective performance of space, expressed via different forms and visions of 'the urban'. Design, arts, architecture, urban planning, sociology, and politics all provide different tools for performatively addressing urban issues and problems, in order to collectively devise a spatial language for creating human life-worlds. Collective performances of the urban, as a global system of co-production of space, furthermore affect social relations and associated aesthetic implications, exemplifying how physical structures, spatial performance, aesthetics, and social relations always remain intertwined (Bourriaud, 2002).

Detailing her conception of spatial performativity, Fischer-Lichte (2015, p. 31) defines four constitutive frames of performative processes:

- unpredictability
- ambivalence
- perception as a performative process
- the transformative power of the performative

First, the outcomes of performative acts are unpredictable. In urban space as in life, we cannot fully predict the outcomes of our actions. In urban spaces, the intended use of a building or place can be subverted, perceptions and atmospheres can change, and new perspectives can supersede the meaning of spatial environments. Second, spaces and spatial performances can be ambivalent. Spatial uses can be prescribed or implicitly understood, while spatial systems of order can nevertheless be upset anytime. Consequently, performative acts are always endowed with a degree of ambivalence, which makes them unpredictable and their outcomes always temporary and fleeting. Third, individual perception is a vital

part of performativity. Spaces are accessed via performative acts as much as through perception. Hence, spaces and their meanings change with the persons perceiving them. Finally, and most importantly, performativity aims at spatial transformation. Places and spatial concepts, people and things can transform in an instant: 'The world is changed – as if by magic' (Fischer-Lichte, 2015, p. 35).

From these four conceptual frames we can derive the potentials of the performative for urban studies: 1) The creation and transformation of urban spaces necessarily is a collective project. 2) Performativity / performative acts on behalf of creators and users are the basis for relating meaningful action to spatial transformation. 3) Space is a performative medium and we are performing it together. 4) Unity in creation and perception is ensured by the immediacy of spatial presence: in the immediacy of spatial perception and the performative transformation of space all potential meanings, worldviews, affects, and emotions are conflated. 5) The immediacy of spatial surroundings presents us with the totality of possibilities for spatial transformation as well as with specific cues for action. 6) Each performance also implies an aesthetic experience, which affects the ways in which performed spaces are perceived. Therefore, each spatial setting provides innumerable pathways towards change, presenting cues towards its achievement. We are contextualising and contextualised at the same time, reading spaces and their implications while we perform them.

In urban studies, the concept of "Participatory Action Research" (PAR) provides a model for collective participation in assessing urban problems, for designing and creating research outcomes, and for advocating their realisation (Chevalier and Buckles, 2019). PAR aims at identifying problems, creating knowledge, and implementing change together with users or inhabitants of spaces in cycles of conception, research, reflection, and critical action, highlighting the aspect of co-creation that characterises participatory processes of urban studies and urban planning. By focusing on users of space, conceiving practical solutions, and implementing democratic processes of planning and decision-making, PAR approaches exhibit „[a] potential orientation to change and transformation. Before intentional change can be fostered,

however, it helps to realize, at an individual, group and community level, that the reality we have co-created, however unintentionally, can be repatterned in participatory inquiry" (Reason and Bradbury, 2001, p. 449). PAR therefore implies a continuous dialogue between researchers and research participants and is based on recurring cycles of analysis, implementation, and reflection (Astleithner and Hamedinger, 2003). If we relate these perspectives to the idea of performativity, PAR results in a collective performance that aims at researching, analysing, and transforming spaces of everyday life, benefiting their inhabitants and users.

Urban Living Labs (ULL), as a logical extension of participatory practices, often aim at urban transformation in the light of rapid social, technological, or economic changes (Marvin et al., 2018), trying to find answers to complex problems by building on community involvement and multiplying agents of urban change. Driving urban innovation in collective, community-based projects, ULL try to provide guidance in urban planning and political decision-making. New conceptions of urban spaces can be drafted and solutions for existing problems can be created, (re-)framing ideas about urban ecologies, social cohesion, and collaboration that ultimately inform political decision-making (Amenta and Timmeren, 2018). Based on the principles of (participatory) action research, ULL aim at urban transformation while ensuring participation and solving today's problems, simultaneously preparing for tomorrow's challenges (Schäpke et al., 2018). Collective approaches to urban transformation such as PAR or ULL chart the way towards collective urbanism and provide a conceptual framework for its achievement. They highlight how the effects of collective spatial performance, especially in densely packed urban areas, benefit from collaboration between involved parties on different levels of society, to ensure social cohesion, collective action, and mutual understanding.

In light of the remarks made above, the contributions to this journal issue can be understood as performative texts that may change our view on achieving and performing collective visions of 'the urban'. They aim at revealing performative aspects of urban spaces from perspectives of sociology, arts-based and artistic research, architecture, urban planning,

or education. They also provide an outline of an approach towards the transformation of urban environments from a perspective of performativity, in order to create fresh insights for urban studies, urban planning, and political decision-making.

Mark Balzar and Zeynep Aksöz Balzar explore how various data on urban spaces can be recorded with tailored technical equipment and represented in different visual and haptic media, creating an interactive experience of urban data that can be understood intuitively and aesthetically. Xian Zheng describes her performative drawing technique for creating multi-perspective drawings of rural / urban environments and demonstrates how it can be employed in researching everyday practices of the inhabitants of these settlements. Ralph Chan investigates the functions of urban spaces in ERASMUS+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps Projects and discusses how informal and non-formal learning experiences can be conceived for urban environments. Itai Margula and Theresa Kraus describe the role of modular museum furniture for transforming the spaces of the museum and providing flexible layouts for aesthetic viewing experiences, while adhering to fundamental principles of sustainability. Rebecca Kahr explains how different types of artistic audio walks can help us experience urban spaces in new ways and transform walking into a multifaceted performative practice. In her essay, Eva Greisberger explores the ways in which urban environments may serve as an interactive learning environment outside of the classroom and provide valuable inputs for pupils and teachers towards broadening their horizons in high school education.

In summary, the contributions to this issue allow for a broadening of perspectives on urban spaces, pave the way towards a performative understanding of urban co-creation, and chart new ways towards participatory processes of inquiry and urban knowledge production. They can inspire future research projects that address the multifaceted nature of urban spaces and map out potentials for transformation from a multidisciplinary perspective in the light of multiple challenges that urban collectives face today. In this sense, the contributions to this issue can not only be understood as blueprints for possible cooperation and collaboration in

a period of rapid urban change, but they can also provide a performative toolkit for urban transformation.

### Conflict of Interests and Ethics

The author declares no conflict of interests. The author also declares full adherence to all journal research ethics policies, involving the participation of human subjects' anonymity and/ or consent to publish.

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