



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

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Master of Science in Sustainable Architecture

*Abstract*

**Living in the public space. Art as a mean of one's territorial  
democracy**

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This thesis project has the purpose to investigate the use of art as a mean of one's territorial democracy into participative processes aimed at the transformation of public space. The theme about the participation on space activation processes is strictly connected to the concept of democracy. Democracy is an urgent theme because it is recognized as a necessary transforming force of "deciding together". As stated before, the public space is the subject of study. It is the most relevant space in a city in which is explicated the "right to the city".

But why art? The tool that is aimed to the general public and that promotes the creation of values and common goals into a political and ethical dimension is art. Today art is recognized as an intangible element, whose part is the definition of identity and of economic and social development of society.

Which is the hypothesis I am elaborating? The hypothesis is based on the idea that art represents a tool of territorial democracy and that through art it is possible to living the public space. Living the public space may seem an oxymoronic expression, this is why "living" is referred to a private dimension linked to the concept of "home". But is it really possible that art could transformate such public spaces until the will of staying in the space grows? Is it possible to define the project of processes of democratisation of the space through art? And which is the architect's role in those processes?

To answer to those questions, the thesis argument included: a first theoretic research about themes like participation, the city, public spaces and public art; the analysis of five projects realized in Italy that make use of art as a transforming motor; qualitative interviews to five professional figures, both architects and artists, involved in the case studies analysed by me.

Finally I tried to answer to the formulated hypothesis, thinking about the role occupied today by an architect into participative processes and defining a possible project of processes of democratization of space through art. Such process includes seven steps which have not the purpose of resolve or specify a method of intervention, instead they represent slots that may open to the consideration of such an actual theme.

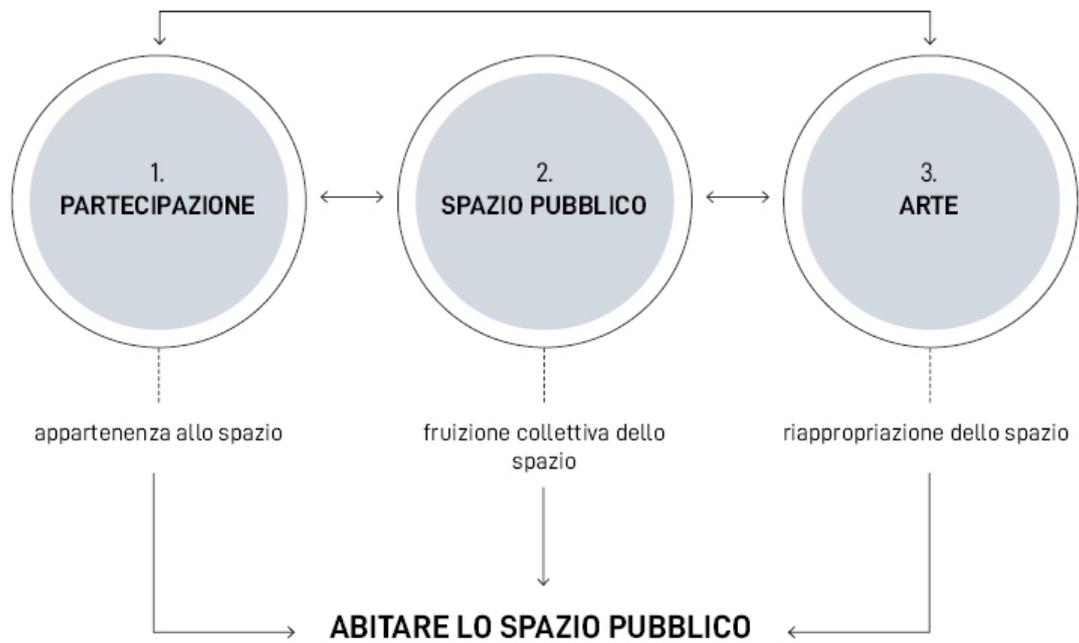


Fig.1 Partecipazione, art and public space

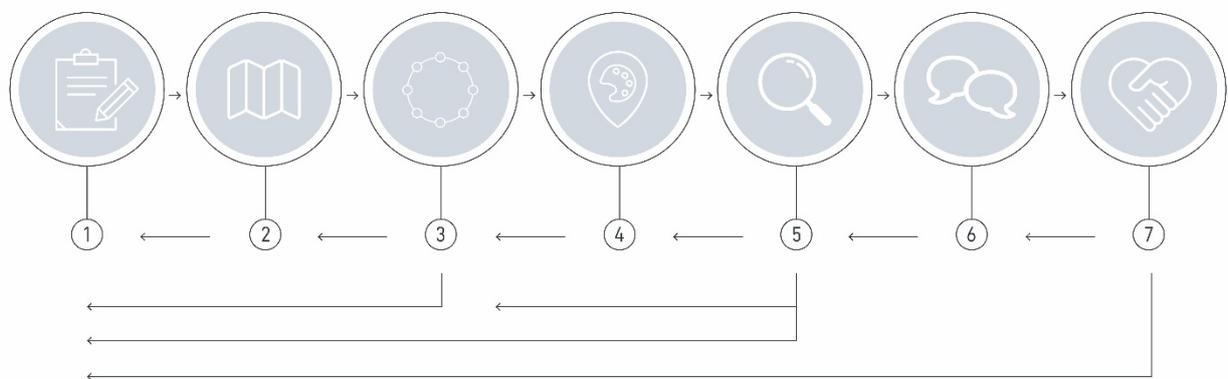


Fig 2. Seven steps of process of democratisation of the space through art

1. Goal setting and programming steps, 2. Site of operation definition, 3. Actors individuation, 4. Artists choice, 5. Territory Knowledge, 6. Definition of participative artistic action, 7. Esecution of participative artistic action