

## Doctoral propositions

- i. “What is the city if not its people?” (Coriolanus, Shakespeare)
- ii. “The way to get at what goes on in the seemingly mysterious and perverse behaviour of cities is, I think, to look closely, ..., at the most ordinary scenes and events, and attempt to see what they mean and whether any threads of principle emerge among them.” (Jane Jacobs 1961)
- iii. Most of the global population lives in urban settings. Proximity and diversity are what makes cities so important in our lives. Public space is a crucial element of cities, it in fact keeps them together. (this thesis)
- iv. Public space is interpreted differently by different disciplines. Space shows between buildings, streets, sidewalks, squares, highways, cafés, city halls, marketplaces. The key to public space is what happens in there. Encounters, moments, sociability, the atmosphere, protests, parades, homelessness: they all constitute the social life of public spaces. (this thesis)
- v. Social life in public space is a resource for people. Who produces this resource? The built environment is provided by public or private entities such as the State or a firm. However, the people contribute to the social life in public space, and, at the same time, they appropriate social life in public space. Roles are highly interconnected. (this thesis)
- vi. To understand closely how social life in public space is created and appropriated, it is possible to isolate one stratum and look at public art. Art, when put in a square, an intersection, a street, or a waterfront, becomes a genuine part of the urban fabric. It is open access, regardless its legal ownership. Public art activates social life in public spaces and people play a crucial role with their shared practices. Even pets play a role in them. (this thesis)
- vii. In San Pere, Barcelona, the statue *Carmela* has given new life to an intersection. People started a petition to have it for longer and it turned the intersection into a convivial square. In the heart of Rotterdam, the controversial statue of a gnome holding a butt plug was brought here by a group of shopkeepers convinced that the quality of public space is also crucial for business so it became a symbol for the city’s audacity. Along Copenhagen’s waterfront, the statue of the slave Queen Mary teaches a lesson of public history, bringing colonialism and representation to the public discourse. In Rome, a frieze along the riverbank does not change the life of the space, but highlights inefficiencies such as a sub-optimal provision and maintenance of that area. (this thesis)
- viii. Social life in public space combines characteristics of public goods, shared infrastructures, and shared goods. However, it is none of these three. The interconnectedness of roles in its production and appropriation makes the case of a common resource, because social life is collectively produced in public space. (this thesis)
- ix. A relational commons is a common resource in which commoners’ behaviours are at the same time consumptive and productive. The common good is the bundle of relations among people and stands for social life. The resource depends on a physical infrastructure, that is the built environment, but that is not a resource alone. Relations are the real core of the social life in public space. (this thesis)
- x. “There is no such thing as a free market” (Chang 2014)
- xi. Public space is important even with no physical space. The coronavirus emptied public space; the result was another public space, a digital one to show that people will seek a public space no matter what.