Theatrical City
Enhancing public theatricality through urban design

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The ballet of the good city sidewalk never repeats itself from place to place, and in any once place is always replete with new improvisations

Jane Jacobs

From: Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961)
PREFACE

All the world’s a stage
And all the men and women are merely players

William Shakespeare
From: As You Like It (1599)

Expressed by the personage Jaques in the sixteenth century play, the citation above may sound quite dramatical. Although all the world might not always seem like a stage on every moment, theatre is in fact everywhere in the city. City life is replete with theatricality, in the way social interactions take place, and in art performances towards an audience. Theatre has always been part of the life of citizens, in various ways. The various kinds of art -or aesthetic-performance (Schechner, 1976) such as Ballet, plays, or concerts, may not always be at hand, but our use of theatre in the way we interact on a daily basis, unconsciously, towards the ones we meet in everyday life, is always present.

According to performance theorists, performances occur in several, and sometimes overlapping situations: in everyday life, in the arts, in sports, in business, in technology, in sex (gender), in ritual and in play (Schechner, 2006). This thesis combines knowledge from the field of Urban studies with the field of Performance Studies in order to form a bridge between performance and urban theories. The thesis focuses on performances that take place in the public spaces of the city, in order to research the relation between the way we ‘perform’ (socially and aesthetically) and our physical environment where we show ourselves to others, our “urban stage” (Makeham, 2005: 151).

As the author of this thesis, I am personally fascinated by both worlds: as a master student of Urbanism graduating on this topic, I made use from both my personal knowledge and experiences from the performing arts, and my academic knowledge educated at the faculty of Architecture at the Technical University Delft.
ABSTRACT

Either when called the “small urban spaces” (Whyte, 2001), or the “spaces between buildings” (Gehl, 1987) or the “public domain” (Müller, 2002), evident is that all various theories about low intensity social contacts (Gehl, 1987) emphasise on the role of the public spaces of the city. In this thesis, the public spaces are defined as the outdoor, accessible spaces of the city, where people are socially accessible for each other. According to theorists like Richard Schechner, and Erving Goffman, these are the places where we perform.

In this thesis, the fragile state of social performance in modern Northwest-European city centres, and the even so uncertain future of aesthetic performance in times of large culture cutbacks formed basis of a two-sided problem statement: Cities miss out in enhancing the social life of cities, by not facilitating social performance optimally, while the performing arts sector misses out by creating aesthetic performances that are withdrawn from city life. In the main question, the issue is raised how these two kinds of performance can be enhanced. The research focuses on the physical conditions that enhance these two, resulting in a single mutual enhancement strategy: public theatricality. The strategy aims to change the public spaces of the city into places where art performances, derived from local art institutions, and the social performances of everyday life together result in lively, exciting city life.

Apart from academic literature, this project uses the outcome of the design project as input for answering the research questions. In that way, the design project functions as a case study. The location of this design project is the city centre of Liverpool. As part of the application of the strategy, three squares in Liverpool are redesigned. The outcome of three designs formed the input basis for the formulation of the main urban design criteria, as a ‘toolbox’ for the urban designer. These criteria, in combination with the strategy, offer a generic solution for the enhancement of social and aesthetic performance in Northwest-European cities.

This thesis Theatrical City is the result of a project of Thomas Galesloot, as the graduation project of the Master Urbanism at the faculty of Architecture, TU Delft, The Netherlands.
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PROJECT
PROJECT
I. PROJECT STRUCTURE

1.1 Project Diagram

The project is roughly divided into a research and a design component. The research component has a generic outcome and wider scope, focusing on performance & socio-urban culture of Northwest European cities. The design on the other hand focuses on a specific city with its local performance culture, the city of Liverpool (UK). In this graduation project Liverpool functions as a ‘test site’ where strategies and design concepts are experimented with during the research & design phase.

The outcomes of the specific design and generic research are then combined in order to conclude and answer the questions raised in the orientation phase. The conclusions then made not only aim to answer on the city scale, but also to a larger international scale (see Research Questions).

The graduation studio Explore lab gave the opportunity to start with a fascination and relating that to the master of graduation (in this case the master of Urbanism). This project’s starting point was a fascination for the performing arts, in relation to public life in cities, and the design of those public spaces.

Figure 2. Diagram showing the structure of this graduation project
1.2 Societal & academic relevance

1.2.1 Design oriented research about public theatricality

The generic outcome of this research is relevant for the knowledge field of urban studies, because current literature forming a bridge between the knowledge of performance studies and urban (design) studies is sparse.

The small book *Theatre & The City* by performance academic Jen Harvie puts a step in the direction of urban studies by addressing the long-lasting, multi-facetted relation that theatre has with the city (Harvie, 2009). A similar research is seen in the article by Paul Makeham called ‘Performing the City’ in the journal *Theatre Research International* (2005). Both *Theatre & The City* and ‘Performing the City’ are written by academics in Performance studies, and therefore most of the aspects addressed are about the position and effect of performing arts in the urbanised world. They give a broad and optimistic insight of the inspirational relation between the performing arts and the city. This literature formed an inspirational basis for the rest of the research, but offered as literature outcome little practical research outcome.

However, this thesis is also about the role of non-art performance, named *social drama* by Richard Schechner (1976). Since many centuries the metaphor of theatre has been used to describe the social behaviour in societies. For example, the Latin term comparable to Shakespeare’s passage about the world as a stage, ‘Theatrum Mundi’ was invented in the baroque period of the 17th century (Jervis, 1998). And also in the past century performance theorists (like Schechner), urban sociologists (like Mumford, Jacobs) psychologists (like Goffman) addressed this topic in one way or another. However, all of this literature doesn’t speak out on a design level about the necessary physical criteria for this social drama (or social performance). This in spite of efforts by urbanists like Gehl or Jacobs to relate the quality of outdoor space to the amount and success of outdoor activities (Gehl, 1987; Jacobs, 2009). Theorists like Jacobs make painfully clear that urbanists and urban designers have the ability to influence and destroy the conditions for those activities. But how to enhance them? What kind of practical instruments are there to use? For urbanists, working on city scale or urban design scale, those practical criteria are of great usefulness when aiming for this designs that evoke these much admired social activities.

Figure 3. Swan Lake by Dutch National Ballet during Grachtenfestival in Utrecht (2011)

One of the goals of this thesis is to find these physical criteria, together with strategic ideas on how to enhance social and aesthetic performance on a larger city scale. As far as the research stretched and information could be found, this topic -from an urbanism point of view- is still untouched.
1.2.2 New concepts for art performance in urban contexts
Out of the academic world, a partial goal of this research is to enhance the functionality of the local performing art sector. Providing this sector with a new strategy in order to react to the changing economic situation and other changes in our art perception and experience, will lead to new concepts of art performance in urban contexts. In the research, for instance, the approach of art performers towards the public spaces of the city is seen as a way for the art sector to reach new audiences. The reason that the public spaces will stimulate the sector is because it allows performers to go beyond their own circle of acquaintances and audiences ‘in the know’: “The idea of the public realm is bound up with the ideas of discovery, of expanding one’s horizons, of the unknown, of surprise, of experiment and of adventure.” (Landry, 2006: 119) As Charles Landry states, the public space forms the “heart of the innovative milieu” (2006: 119).

Figure 4. Princess Park Festival in Liverpool (2006)
1.3 Problem Field

1.3.1 Focus

The problem field that will be described in this chapter has two elements. It will give insight on the problems occurring in the field of performing arts sector, and in the field of urban design of city centres. Central is the understanding that currently, city centres are not able to offer its users the optimal level of experiences, resulting in dull city centres, with closed off introvert performance institutes, and unexciting, traffic-focussed public spaces.

Performing arts and the design of cities are both strongly nested in society. And because societies have changed strongly in the past decades, due to globalisation, democratisation, digitalisation and commercialisation (Idema & Herpt, 2010) our understandings of performing arts and cities have also changed a lot. Both the art sector and the urban design sector are redefining themselves in these ever-changing situations. The context and problems of both disciplines are introduced in order to grasp this problem field.

In this thesis, the focus is on Northwest European cities, with the British situation in particular. Although the design is taking place in Liverpool (GB), lessons can be learned when viewing the problems in a broader perspective. For example, input from Scandinavian designs and Dutch cultural initiatives, are being used as case studies and reference research, and the outcome might as well be useful for other Northwest European cities. In the United States, a lot has been written about ‘creative industries’, and ‘city life’. Although highly valuable input, it has to be kept in mind that this literature answers to a different urban and cultural structure, than our Northwest European cities.

1.3.2 The city misses out facilitating social performance

The impact of functionalist planning and architecture on our city life has been devastating. This is in short the opinion shared by numerous post-modernist writers describing the way we interact socially on the public spaces of the city designed by the great planners and designers of the functionalist period. In these post-modern beliefs, the city centres before functionalism were places where this public interaction was blossoming, and urban design and architecture unconsciously stimulated this attitude. But what is this the central belief in these post-modern concepts with names as “city as a stage” (Mumford, 2007), “city life” (Jacobs, 2009), or “life between buildings” (Gehl, 1987)?
Gray Read, professor at Florida University states that the modern tradition that most functionalistic architects learned at school rejected ‘theatricality’ as a starting point for architectural design. Instead of that it focuses on designing urban buildings, while largely abandoning the street to cars, concentrating on private space (Read, 2009). Read then refers to Paris of the 1920s, while it functioned as a centre of art and culture, with cafés being actually open air meeting places. At the same time however, famous modernist planner and architect Le Corbusier that the streets where “dark corridors that denied the population air, light and greenery” (Read, 2009: 2). Le Corbusier then famously proposed tearing down a great section of Paris’ centre to erect apartment towers in a park called Le Plan Voisin, “a graphic demonstration of a theory of urbanism that has become part of the modern legacy” (Read, 2009: 2). Although this design was never realised, many similar projects all around the world built in the following decades, making

*Le Plan Voisin* for postmodernists a symbol of the faults of functionalist planning.

Richard Sennett expresses in his article ‘The Open City’ his opinion regarding this plan: “Not only is Le Corbusier’s architecture a kind of industrial manufacture of buildings, he has in the 'Plan Voisin' tried to destroy just those social elements of the city which produce change in time, by eliminating unregulated life on the ground plane; people live and work, in isolation, higher up.” (Sennett, 2006: 1) Sennett then describes expressively how under influence of this typology, cities at that time resulted in what he calls ‘The Brittle City’, describing it as a “regime of power that wants order and control” (Sennett, 2006: 1), describing urbanists as control freaks over-determining the city’s visual forms and social functions. He cites William Empson when stating: “the arts result from overcrowding”. (Sennett, 2006)

However, in the middle of the functionalist period, in the 1930s, one of “the champions of progressive urban planning of the twentieth century” (Makeham, 2005: 150), Lewis Mumford, already introduced new urban planning concepts, contrasting with the modernistic beliefs. Lewis Mumford understood the city as a “theatre of social action”, in his article of 1937 (Mumford, 2007: 87). According to Mumford, this was a quality only found in cities, suburbs lacked them. Especially interesting was the role he saw for urbanists, in designing the city in such a way that it enhanced this “urban drama” as it is referred to by performance theorists Paul Makeham (2005: 150): “To embody these new possibilities in city life, which come to us not merely through better technical organisation but through acuter sociological understanding, and to dramatize the activities themselves in appropriate individual and urban structures, forms the task of the coming generation.” (Mumford, 2007: 89) In this same article of 1937, Mumford

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Figure 6. *Le Plan Voisin* by Le Corbusier (1925) in Paris.
compares a good city to a stage-set that, if well-designed, fully enhances the actors and their acts in the play (2007).

Living in the same city as Mumford, Jane Jacobs and Mumford both pretested against the urban-renewal plans in New York led by the modernistic city planner Robert Moses. Inspired by Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs also refers to theatricality when talking about the well-functioning street she lived in the 1960s, in Greenwich Village, New York. An area not yet changed in the hands of Robert Moses. Jacobs describes the daily activity in the street as a ballet, that may look like a disorder on first notice, but is actually in a functional balance, creating social safety in her street. (Jacobs, 2009) In the book, this street is well described, and this ballet is often referred to when Jacobs criticises the urban planning developments taking place in New York City. At that time of functionalism, many of the urban projects where large, top down, and did not gave room for disorder and exceptions in the carefully planned functionalistic system.

In his book Life Between Buildings, Gehl describes extensively how architectural trends since the Middle ages influenced our life between buildings. After describing the medieval period and the renaissance, Gehl describes how functionalism in urban planning dramatically affected city life. “Throughout the entire history of human habitation, streets and squares had formed focal points and gathering places, but with the advent of functionalism, streets and squares where literally declared unwanted. Instead, they were replaced by roads, paths, and endless grass lawns.” (Gehl, 1987: 47) Gehl states further on that the consequences of the social environment where not discussed, simply because it was not recognised that architecture and planning had influence on social activities. The functionalistic division in city functions (separating factories, houses, shops, etc.) may have reduced the disadvantages and may have increased health in the cities, “but it also reduced the possible advantages of closer contact ” (Gehl, 1987: 48).

Gehl describes in this book how the design of these spaces between buildings can greatly affect the social life of cities, and that this city life is of great importance of a city. This will be researched more deeply in chapter 3 of this thesis. Gehl ends this historical chapter with the sentence: “If a team of planners at any time had been given the task of doing what they could to reduce life between buildings, they hardly could have achieved more thoroughly what has inadvertently been done in the sprawling suburban areas, as well as in numerous “urban” redevelopment schemes.” (Gehl, 1987)

The publication Warme Stad (Warm City in English) by Müller (2002) is a plea for the small-scale, social contacts between strangers and acquaintances in the city. Müller states that the most important precondition for a ‘Warm City’ is the presence of a public domain. Places in the city that have such a public domain can be characterised as places with a small scale structure an urban morphology. Müller refers to publications of Gehl, Whyte and Lofland by stating that small urban scales brings citizens and activities together. An urban structure with a large scale and a monotone character doesn’t attract many people.

As a summary can be stated that since the functionalistic period that had impact from the 1930 till the 1980s, a lot of harm has been done to the way we act socially in the public spaces of the city. To restore this, a greater focus should be put on these small-scale social contacts, this life between buildings, promoted but named differently in publications of Gehl, Jacobs, Mumford, Sennett and others since the beginning of functionalism. And although the functionalistic period is behind us, we are still confronted with its legacy. Therefore, city centres still miss out enhancing the small scale social contacts. Throughout this thesis, these small scale social
contacts will be researched more deeply, in the perspective of social performance. For a better description of social performance see chapter 3.3: What is social performance?

1.3.3 Performing art sector misses out facilitating aesthetic performance
We live in a time, where more than ever the role of a ‘creative class’ is being valued highly (Florida, 2007) and the performing arts is used as a tool for an ‘urban growth strategy’ (Witt, 1987: 16) in urban planning and the enhancement of ‘local difference’ (Cohen, 2007). However, maintaining a large public funded performing art sector in the city has its price: in Europe, in countries like the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, performing arts organizations depend heavily on governmental subsidies and private sponsorship (Harvie, 2009). Art organizations, seen as ‘growth machines’ (Witt, 1987: 15) can indirectly create financial benefits for a city, but as organizations themselves are usually unprofitable. In the art sector this is often seen as inevitable, a logic consequence of the experimental attitude of this art form opposing against conservative theatre that reinforces consumer capitalism, such as ‘megamusicals’ (Harvie, 2009: 34).

In the current economic climate however, when the financial balances of the governments are under pressure, the need for funding is evaluated more critically. This led to the decreased art funding of the past years, often through abrupt cuts of art organizations in many European countries. For instance the Arts Council England, an art organization responsible for the distribution of public and lottery funding in England, is facing a dramatic budget cut of 30% (Brown, 2011). In the Netherlands, the performing arts (from 236 to 156 million) and the plastic arts (54 to 31 million) are hit the most severe in the national budget (Boekma, 2011). The cuts have led to large protests, such as the 'shout for culture’ protests in 2010 in the Netherlands. But more than just protesting against this abrupt governmental policy, there is a general understanding within the art sector that this sector needs to face changes in current economical climate.

Figure 7. Dutch protest against cultural cutback in 2010 “Schreeuw om cultuur” (Shout for culture)

In Beyond the Black Box and the White Cube by Idema and Van Herpt (2010) a search of a new attitude in management of design of museums and theatres in the Netherlands is described, presenting several aspects this new attitude through good examples from within and abroad. In the introduction of the book Idema & Van Herp link this statement with an analysis of the position of our cultural institutions in society. According to Idema & Van Herp, the last decennia mega trends like globalisation, democratisation, commercialisation and digitalisation have changed the world a lot, and therefore our perception on art, museums and theatres. Our art
has become more digital, more popular, bigger, more conceptual, and with more crossovers. These developments ask for new ways of presenting and experiencing. Idema & Van Herp don’t want to get rid of the black box (the theatre) or the white cube (museum), but there’s an increasing demand of new places that are bigger, more open, less isolated and less mono-functional. Places where we can “enjoy more” (2010: 13).

Another aspect of the performing art sector not functioning optimally, is the use through culture-led-urban regeneration in recent decades. The success of Richard Florida’s *Rise of the Creative Class* (2007) underpins that the ‘creative city’ concept as a tool for urban planning is increasingly popular. Freestone & Gibson (2004) indicate several issues in realizing the ‘creative city’: If applied wrong, culture-led-urban regeneration can also harm the authentic and distinctiveness of local culture. Gibson & Freestone also state that cultural strategies are not automatically good for local economic development. If strategies are planning to ‘remake’ the city’s cultural identity, it may create ‘Ersatz’ (surrogate) outcomes and drive out creative spirit that existed in the first place. (Freestone & Gibson, 2004: 7) Charles Landry’s *The Creative City – Toolkit for urban innovators* makes clear that the fostering of a strong local identity is crucial for the ‘creative city’, as can be derived from the seven factors for a creative city Landry defines (2006).

Social anthropologist, Sara Cohen researched the culture-led urban regeneration in Liverpool of the past decades, focussing on the relation between popular music culture and city development (Cohen, 2007). She also indicates threads in these culture-led regeneration processes, that should be taken care of: the development of the local music business can also thread the local character and qualities. In the case of Liverpool, the case study of her research, the over commercialisation of Beatles tourism (Liverpool was the birthplace of this band) could risk the effect of *disneyfication*. According to many Liverpool artists for example, as a result of the ongoing commercial development, the area around Cavern Club (the pub where the Beatles started performing) had become “the antithesis of musical creativity that it once represented” (Cohen, 2007: 218). It has become a popular touristic street that has little relation to the authentic Liverpool culture anymore. Thus, culture-led regeneration, if applied wrong, can also harm the authentic and distinctiveness of local culture.

The Dutch book *De Uitstad (The Outcity in English)* edited by Burgers (1992) contains a chapter about the current popularity of festivals as a promotion of the city’s carefully planned image of a cultural hot spot. Burger states however, similarly to the findings of Cohen, that new ‘festivals’ in the city, often programmed with non-local artists, have the risk of missing a local cultural connection, and therefore also lack the acclaimed effect of stimulating the local art sector.
As a summary it can be stated that the role the performing arts sector fulfils in the city has quite some deficiencies. In short, the sector misses out facilitating aesthetic performance (art performances), in a context that has changed due to economic recession, and ongoing democratisation and popularisation of art. In order words, the sector needs to be updated. This is also reflected in a statement by Idema & Van Herp: “innovation and the culture sector might seem synonyms (...) but when we look at the staff management, the structure of the organisation, or the multi-functionality of museums and theatres, they appear to be very traditional” (Idema & Herpt, 2010: 8).

1.3.4 The case of Liverpool
As has been said in the introduction, Liverpool is selected as the case study for this research. Therefore, the problem situation of this city will be described throughout this sub chapter.

In the case of Liverpool, when reading urban and regional plans, the ambitions are set high. Liverpool, in 2008 the European Capital of Culture has seen, like so many smaller cities the lurking examples of cities like New York and London, where the creative ‘factories' are popping out of the old factory buildings with immense speed. In the recent years, huge riverfront developments have taken place in the city, resulting project like the immense shopping area Liverpool One and the new Museum of Liverpool. But, can these projects be part of a long-term regeneration project? Or are these examples of the ‘one-offs’ as written by Freestone and Gibson (2004)?

Cohen (2007) analysed this culture-led urban regeneration process in the case of Liverpool, with an outcome that applies to many British, and other Western-European cities. In the city, suffering from ongoing de-industrialisation and increase of poverty, culture-led urban regeneration became a struggle for a way out of decline. Since 1932, the demography of Liverpool has shrunk every year in a row, and Liverpool had to deal with unemployment rates that were one of the highest in England. (Cohen, 2007)
According to Cohen, some of the initiatives have had a positive outcome. Music culture contributed to the redevelopment of several quarters within the city (Ropewalks and the Carven Quarter) because musicians, audiences and music entrepreneurs helped to transform them into places that “generated, for some residents and outsiders, a sense of identity, belonging and attachment” (Cohen, 2007: 214). But Cohen writes in her conclusion that high-profile flagship projects planned for 2008 had a negative impact on small art businesses, many participants of ‘grass-roots’ cultural activities regarded the city’s status of European Capital of Culture “little more than a cynical economic and marketing initiative” (Cohen, 2007: 218). Cohen also states that culture-led urban regeneration had also the effect that it encouraged large scale commercial developments, resulting in privatisation of urban space and a rise in rents and property values, causing an “exodus of certain groups and ‘misfits’ from those areas, including small music businesses and groups of young musicians and fans” (Cohen, 2007: 219).

But, as Liverpool looked for large-scale developments, like the harbour front area, and the stunningly big Liverpool One shopping district (170,000 m2), less has been done on the smaller scale, facilitating also the less-wealthy inhabitants of Liverpool in their needs. Apparently, designing and transforming cities into places that evoke expression and participation of its users - in other words enhance city life - is still a point of struggle.

This is reflected in the document Liverpool Urban Design Guide made by the urban design department of the Liverpool City Council. In the urban design guide, seven objectives of good urban design are stated, the quality of public realm being one of them: ‘a key principle is that people attract people. Places which feel good will encourage people to use them, and places which are well used stand a better chance of being prosperous and well cared for. The aim is to produce friendly, vibrant public places where people feel welcome to socialise, visit and go about their business and leisure in comfort and safety.” (Planning Service Liverpool City Council, 2003: 24) The municipality also acknowledges the role of the bottom-up approach in good urban design: “Good urban design delivers benefits by helping developments respond positively to broad public objectives and concerns – this promotes social
In the case of the art sector, the British arts cut described above have also reached Liverpool. The British newspaper *The Guardian* published a list of 206 organisations that after current season, in September 2012 suddenly won’t receive any Arts Council England funding at all anymore. Seven of these projects are situated in the city of Liverpool. Many other local organisations will phase serious cutbacks in the near future. However, in 2010 the municipality started a £28.000.000 construction project for a new Everyman Theatre, showing that there actually is a lot of money at hand, when municipal authorities feel the need. Harvie states that certain developments are often seen in the UK, because state investors are sometimes more willingly to invest in theatre buildings than productions. One result was that the magnificent, monumental, new theatres sometimes struggled to support production (Harvie, 2009). The city of Liverpool has eleven theatre buildings at the moment. Is building more theatres the solution to enhancing the art sector in the city? Or should the ambitions to invest in a more constructive way for the art sector itself?
1.4 Problem Statement
As could be read in sub chapter 1.3, problems arise in two worlds: on one hand the cities miss out enhancing the social life of cities, and on the other hand the performing art sector misses out facilitating aesthetic performances for the audiences of the city optimally.

In short, the problem statement is as follows:

Cities miss out in enhancing the social life of cities, by not facilitating social performance optimally, while the performing arts sector misses out by creating aesthetic performances that are withdrawn from city life.

1.5 Research Goals
A transformation of both the cities and the local performing arts sectors are seen as the key for to success. The focus point of this research will be put on spatial transformations, so that the urban designer, operating from a coherent strategic framework, has the instruments to intervene with modest sized interventions. Included in the goal is a specification on the scope of the research field: Northwestern Europe. Although the design is focused in one city specifically: Liverpool (UK), the research aims to come up with more generic results. Therefore, the main research questions is as follows:

Enhancing both social and aesthetic performances in Northwest European cities through urban design.

Following from the two-sided problem statement, the research goal also has two elements.

A. Transforming the public spaces of the city for better social performance
The functionalistic urban planning and architecture of the twentieth century has had a negative impact on the social public life in cities. And although the functionalistic period is behind us, we are still confronted with its legacy. Therefore, city centres still miss out enhancing the small scale social contacts. Throughout this thesis, these small scale social contacts will be researched more deeply, in the perspective of social performance. The first sub goal of this research is to find out ways to transform the public spaces of the city in order to enhance social performance.

B. Enhancing the functionality of the local performing art sector for better aesthetic performance
The performing art sector should create aesthetic performances that trigger the interest of a targeted audience, and lower the threshold to participate in any kind of way (as an audience, as performer to be, as volunteer, as donator), so that the performing arts sector provides the city of performance culture of all kinds. The second sub goal is therefore to strengthen the functionality of the performing art sector in the city in order to enhance aesthetic performance.
1.6 Research Questions

The main research question is a logic consequence of the research goal, formulated as a question. The main question, aiming to be answered in this thesis is:

How to enhance social and aesthetic performance in Northwest European cities through urban design?

In order to conduct the research in a structured way, the broad main question is divided in smaller sub research questions. These smaller questions make it possible to oversee the different components of the research better. At the ending of each sub research, the sub questions will be answered with a short conclusion. The sub questions are:

1. What is the relation between social and aesthetic performance?
   Researching what are the characteristics of both kinds of performance. The first step is to separately research both kinds of performance, before relating the two. When relating, the focus will be put on both the differences as the similarities. The research is done in a historical context, the result of a literature research about what has been said about social and aesthetic performance in the past and in the more recent years. → See chapter 3

2. How to strategically enhance both social and aesthetic performance in cities?
   In this chapter, the current problematic situation, written in the problem field, will be explored further to come up with possible strategic solutions. Will it be a two sided strategy, or are there possibilities for a collaboration, a mutual enhancement strategy? → See chapter 4

3. What are the criteria of urban design that enhance both aesthetic and social performance in cities?
   In the final sub research, the possible solutions will be researched in more detail, zooming into the design aspects that enhance both kinds of performance. What are the physical conditions that stimulate this? What are the generic spatial aspects that could be addressed to all Northwest European cities that lack a good facilitation of social and aesthetic performance? The outcome of this sub question hopes to contribute a useful, generic outcome that forms a good starting point for other urban designers operating in Northwest European cities, aiming for an exciting public life and art sector. → See chapter 5

The three sub questions will answer the various fragments of the main question:
1.7 Design Goal

As introduced earlier, this project’s design location is the city centre of Liverpool, in the United Kingdom. The scale of this design is focussed on the smaller scale transformations of the urban fabric, in coherence with a larger strategic framework of the city. Further detail of this design project can be found in chapter 6 and 7. The design goal is in fact the same as the research goal, with the only difference being the location specified as Liverpool:

How to enhance social and aesthetic performances in the city of Liverpool (UK) through urban design?

However, this is not the only goal that has to be achieved in this design project. The design project also functions as a test ground for the second and third sub question. During the design project, the strategy will be applied to the city of Liverpool, resulting in an urban design of several public spaces in the city. An analysis of this designs will then contribute to the research of generic urban design criteria.
## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research methodology

In the scheme below, the methodology used in the research is stated per sub question, since each question acquires a different approach.

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<td>- Reference research</td>
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### 2.2 Literature research: combination of topics

Literature research forms a large part of the research, all sub questions require some literature reading, directly or indirectly. But since reading literature is a very broad term, the different topics are introduced in the theoretical framework diagram (next page). They are being used to give insight in different kind of literature that is needed to read and extract results from. In the scheme, the names (in white) resemble to the authors related to that topic. The research has a multi-disciplinary approach: literature from several knowledge fields is combined to answer the several sub questions.

The trans-disciplinary approach of this research requests a theoretic framework that is positioned in several disciplines. In the scheme below this framework is simplified in roughly four disciplines, three within the urban studies (economy, design, sociology) and the fourth being the performance studies.

The large dotted circle overlapping these three fields represents the research scope needed in order to understand the problem field and reach the research & design goal. In the centre of this scheme, a circle containing the text ‘cross pollination city & theatre’ is in short a way of reaching the trans-disciplinary goal, the enhancement of both social and aesthetic performance. The purple circles are the many sub topics within this research field.
In white the (main) writers of relevant literature addressing these topics are added, giving an insight to the scope of knowledge that has been found during this project.

After making this scheme, it became clear that the topics on the overlapping borders of disciplines (like social performance for example) are most relevant for understanding the main research question since they contain on a multi-sided research, just like this project.

The topics purely in the sociology and economy part although equally presented, haven’t played a dominant part in the research. However understanding these research topics better was needed to achieve the research goals.

Figure 11. Theoretical Framework diagram
2.3 Reference Research Methods
An important element of the research is the reference research, mainly conducted in order to answer sub question 3. The visits of public spaces in the Netherlands, the UK and abroad have formed the input as references. All the references research in the third sub question, I personally visited in the past years. This is because a site visit results in a better and thorough insight in quality of space and activities.

2.4 Site visits and analysis
A first site visit to Liverpool took place from 22nd till 24th of November 2011. Photos and observations were made of the different public spaces of Liverpool. A first selection was made of possibly interesting locations for design, and to what kind of existing qualities and opportunities to respond to. Although the visit gave a lot of useful information about the outdoor activity on the different streets and plazas, the windy November weather caused many activities to be on low-level.

During that visit I also organised a meeting with an employee of the Urban Design department of the Municipality of Liverpool. That meeting turned out to be very useful: apart from an informative talk I was given two of their publications: The Urban Design Guide (a design instrument, containing guidelines for new design in the city of Liverpool) and Liverpool: Shaping the City, a RIBA publication containing the highlights of architecture and urban design in the city of Liverpool, containing extra background information.

A second visit to Liverpool took place from the 20th till 23rd of April 2012. At that time I was able to zoom in further at the chosen design locations and add the needed photography. I had chosen this weekend because at the same time, a large outdoor theatre festival was held in the city centre: Sea Odyssey by French theatre company Royal de Luxe. Large puppets, as high as buildings, controlled by large mechanical constructions made a three-day choreography through the city centre. The festivals of Royal de Luxe are known for the huge amount of visitors they attract. Another aspect that made the visit different than the first visit, was the season. The first visit was made in a windy, cold and mostly grey November: it was interesting to compare the increase street life activity with the November situation.
RESEARCH
RESEARCH
3 FIRST SUB QUESTION

3.1 Introducing the broad spectrum of performance

3.1.1 The insistent twentieth-century question
Performance is a term hard to pin down, and so are its subdivisions. In the broad field of performance studies, many views are represented. David Wiles states in *Places of Performance* (2003) that in the 1960s and 1970s a clear distinction between *theatre-as-institution* and other forms of *theatricality* was maintained. This viewpoint was rejected by many performance theorists in the following decades. Mike Pearson, now Professor of Performance studies, expressed in his 1998 manifesto his irritation for the conservative character of this *institution*: “I can no longer sit passive in the dark watching a hole in the wall, pretending that the auditorium is a neutral vessel of representation. It is a spatial machine that distances us from the spectacle and that allies subsidy, theatre orthodoxy and political conservatism.” (Pearson, 1998: 39) Wiles shares a similar opinion by stating that “theatre-as-institution is a concept that serves the needs of the professional theatre historian” (2003: 2) Nevertheless, the question ‘What is the difference between theatre-as-art and mere theatricality?’ is seen by Wiles as “the insistent twentieth-century question” (2003: 2). Frankly, this question is similar to the first sub question raised in this thesis.

In the 1976 article ‘Selective Inattention’ Richard Schechner takes position in this debate by introducing the eight-shaped-diagram, dividing performance into two worlds: that of social drama and of aesthetic drama. The diagram visualising this, shows a continuous relation between theatre-as-art and everyday-theatricality (1976: 12) and was the result of combined research of Schechner with cultural anthropologist Victor Turner, and will be explained further on in this sub-research. Directly or indirectly, this theory formed a basis of a wide range of publications by Schechner and other performance theorists in answering the ‘insistent twentieth-century question’. Richard Schechner is often acclaimed to be the guru of Performance studies (Wiles, 2003: 3).

More recent publications concerning social and aesthetic performance make clear that this division is in fact a simplified separation as well, just like the institutional division of the 1970s. In his more recent publication, the critically acclaimed educational book *Performance studies, an introduction*, Schechner expanded this diagram by stating that there not two, but eight kinds of performance. And not only there is performance in everyday life and in the arts as stated in 1976, but also in sports, in business, in technology, in sex, in ritual (sacred and secular) and in play (2006). “From the vantage of the kind of performance theory I am propounding, every action is a performance.” (Schechner, 2006: 38). This is reflected in a similar Performance-introduction book by Marvin Carlson describing the extreme popularity of the term *performance* and the fact that “all human activity could potentially be considered as performance” (Carlson, 2004: 5). If everything can possibly be seen as performance, what value is there left in using performance research?

3.1.2 Use of the model
As stated in the beginning of this paragraph, performance is a term hard to pin down, but the continuous existence of the academic field of Performance studies proves that the term performance is in fact greatly usable, if is accepted that subdivisions and theories of performance at the end always will be simplified models of reality.
But, like the publication of Schechner in 1976, a simplified structure of the workings of performance might lead to great new insights.

This thesis uses the subdivision made by Schechner in 1976 as a starting point, knowing that this is not a perfect model (as no model of reality). A start is made by first researching the differences of the two types of performance in the academic world (chapter 1.2 and 1.3) before relating the two performances, again using academic publications (chapter 1.4).

3.2 What is aesthetic performance?

3.2.1 Definition
In the 1976’s publication Schechner introduces the term aesthetic performance to define the world of performance related to the arts. The first element ‘aesthetic’ refers to the world of aesthetica, a philosophical study of beauty and taste, with the philosophy of art as one of its branches. The second element ‘performance’ relates to “showing doing, pointing to, underlining and displaying doing” (Schechner, 2006: 28)

Aesthetic (art) performance can be seen as a category within the broad spectrum of The Arts, like other categories as the Visual arts, and Literary arts (Encyclopaedia Britannica). But also this categorisation is not strict, and used consistently, and finding an ultimate definition of what is performing arts is not possible. In order to prevent an extensive literary review of the different perceptions of what is the role and history of performance, this research focuses onto the physical aspects of aesthetic performance.

3.2.2 Examples of aesthetic performance

Figure 13. Richard Schechner’s diagram of the flows between “social drama” and “aesthetic drama”.

Figure 14. Street theatre festival Mooi Weer Spelen, Delft (2011)
3.2.3 Physical condition: bodily co-presence

German Performance theorist, Erika Fischer-Lichte gives grip regarding aesthetic performance by stating that ‘the bodily co-presence’ is a crucial condition of a performance. ‘For a performance to occur, actors and spectators must assemble to interact in a specific place and for a certain period of time.’ (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 32) When this theory is accepted, it would mean that the places of art performance are always physical. This is reflected in the book *A Short History of Western Performance Space* that categorises several physical locations of performance. Those places Wiles indicates are for instance “the sacred space”, “the public space” and “the processional space” (2003).

Performance theorist Fischer-Lichte, like Wiles, Pearson or Schechner, reject theories that define performances as an object-subject relation, where the performer is the active object, and the spectator passively consumes the performance: “Instead, their bodily co-presence creates a relationship between co-subjects. Through their physical presence, perception, and response, the spectators become co-actors that generate the performance by participating in the “play” (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 32) Fischer-Lichte states that her theory is derived from 1920’s writings by Max Hermann that defined performance as a game in which everyone is a player, actors and spectators alike.

3.2.4 The basic aspects of a performance: performing, spectating, physical space

David Wiles states in his introduction of *A Short History of Western Performance Space* that “theatre worth experiencing (..) necessarily folds together ‘place, performance and public’” quoting from Mike Pearson’s manifesto (1998: 40). The theory of Fischer-Lichte combined with the three elements by Pearson and the
performance definition by Schechner results in three aspects of every aesthetic performance:

A performance is in principle a relation between performing and spectating, embodied by the performer and the spectator, and a background, the ‘stage set’ in which the bodily co-presence is situated: the place of performance. This physical location, could be anywhere: on a contemporary stage, on a public square, in a living room, etc. For the consistency of this research, this place of performance will be called ‘the stage’ throughout this thesis. An extra remark is that the roles of performer and spectator could be overlapping with other performances at the same time. A street artist watching a colleague working on the other side of the road, while giving a show to passers-by is both a spectator and a performer at the same time.

3.2.5 Aesthetic performance in the city
Every performance has its conditions that determine the outcome of performance. As Carlson notes, it is not only what happens on a stage that determines this. The location of that stage in the city, its audience, the physical appearance of the stage, they all have impact on the aesthetic performance (Carlson, 1989). Colleague performance theorist Jen Harvie articulates five material conditions of performance: ‘space, institutional structures and practices, money and people’. (2009: 24) Consequently, all these conditions also have their limits. As was said, this research zooms into the physical conditions of aesthetic performance. From the conditions Harvie mentioned, this thesis focuses on two: on ‘space’ and ‘institutional structures’. As for the second one, the problem statement at the start of this thesis already introduced the limits and weaknesses of the current aesthetic performance sector. Therefore, the second sub question will search for the right direction of a transformation of this sector, all in relation to ‘space’.

3.3 What is social performance?
3.3.1 Theatricality of daily life
The daily-life within the city has often been compared to that of theatre, of performance. One of the earliest comparison between city life and performance was made by William Shakespeare, in As You Like It, written around 1600, he makes the melancholic Jaques say: “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players: They have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts.” (2009) This quote, as part of a larger act, is one of the most quoted phrases of his work, and influenced many theorists, like Kenneth Burke with his theory of Dramatism (Carlson, 2004). Burke’s theory of Dramatism again, formed one of the inspirations for Erving Goffman’s performance theory (Carlson, 2004), described in the book The Presentation Of Self In Everyday Life, first published in 1959. Goffman uses theatrical performance as a metaphor to discuss the importance of role playing in social situations (Carlson, 2004): “A character staged in a theatre is not in some ways real (...) but the successful staging (...) involves use of real techniques – the same techniques by which everyday persons
sustain their real social situations.” (Goffman, 1990: 254) Although Goffman states in the conclusion that the use of theatrical terms in the book was on a purely metaphorical basis, Goffman’s theory was however highly influential in performance studies, in his definition of performance, and the delicate relationship between performer and audience (Carlson, 2004).

Social performance is inseparably connected to city life. Jonathan Raban, in Soft City, dedicates this to the fact that in the city, we are constantly surrounded by strangers (1974). This results in constant quick scanning of others, relating that to your own identity, causing the forming of stereotypes of the others you meet. This eventually causes exaggeration of your own character, turning you in an actor: “Once we treat people, morally and functionally in terms of single

synecdochal roles [stereotypes], we turn both our lives, and theirs into a formal drama.” (Raban, 1974: 26)

One very famous observation of theatrical behaviour among unfamiliar users of the city, referred to as strangers by Raban, is written by Jane Jacobs, described earlier in this thesis. Jacobs describes the daily activity in her street in Greenwich Village New York as a ballet, that may look like a disorder, but has a function, namely that it creates social safety, although the performers are complete strangers: “This order is all composed of movement and change, and although it is life, not art, we may fancifully call it the art form of the city and liken it to the dance (...) an intricate ballet in which the individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce each other and compose an orderly whole.” (Jacobs, 2009: 77)

3.3.2 Definition

According to Erving Goffman our daily life is full of social performance and can be defined as follows: “A performance may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants. (...) When an individual or performer plays the same part to the same audience on different occasions, a social relationship is likely to arise.” (1990: 15) Schechner states about social performance: “that making art involves training and rehearsing is clear, but everyday life also involves years of training and practice, of learning appropriate specific bits of behaviour, of adjusting and performing one’s life roles in relation to social and personal circumstances” (Schechner, 2006: 28).
3.3.3 Examples

Evidently, social performance is created, just like aesthetic performance between a (social) performer and an audience. Erving Goffman states that all our social relationships actually follow out of repetitions of social performances. (Goffman, 1990) The research on aesthetic performance (chapter 3.2) has learnt us that every aesthetic performance exists of tree items: performer, spectator and stage. Goffman explains that this stage, which he calls ‘setting’ is also important for the staging of social performance: “First there is the ‘setting’, involving furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it.” (Goffman, 1990: 22) So, in short can be stated that social performance, just as aesthetic performance consists of the triangle or elements.

Figure 19. “All over the world, side walk café chairs face street life” (Gehl, 1987) Sidewalk cafe in Middelburg, Netherlands.

Figure 20. Public chess playing in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Figure 21. Street manifestations, such as the Critical Mass, yearly held in San Francisco (US)
Different of aesthetic (art) audience is that social performance ‘audiences’ might be part of a performance unconsciously. Social performance is so part of our daily social interaction, we are mostly unaware. Because the terminology of ‘audience’ is strongly associated with a group of people watching passively a performance, the term spectator is used in throughout thesis. Another important note is that the roles are more interchangeable than compared to aesthetic performance: A performer in one performance, can be a spectator in the performance of others at the same time. And although this ambiguity is seen in some experimental theatre projects as well, the roles during art performance are usually more clearly distinct.

Slightly old, but ever so valuable empirical research is done by William H. Whyte and his team of students in the 1980’s “Street Life Project” leading to the publication *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* in 1988 (Whyte, 2001). Whyte’s careful observations of human behaviour in the public plazas of New York city, the actual use of those public spaces, led to clear and practical conclusions about how plazas should be designed, on small scale level. It is striking to notice how valuable these outcomes still are, also for this research. However, Whyte’s observations unfortunately don’t explain what are the social techniques used on those public plaza’s.

Another example is Jan Gehl’s book *Life Between Buildings: using public space*, that emphasises the role of small scale social contacts between people in the city. The title of the book already introduces the location for this interaction: between buildings, the outdoor, public spaces of the city. Gehl divides three types of outdoor activities: necessary activities, optional activities and social activities. (Gehl, 1987) Gehl focuses on this third type that he also calls ‘resultant’ activities, because they develop in connection with the other activities when people pass by on another: “social activities include children at play, greetings and conversations, communal activities of various kinds and finally – as the most widespread social activity – passive contacts, that is, simply seeing and hearing other people” (1987: 14). It is exactly these widespread passive social activities that Gehl emphasizes on in the following chapters, he calls them *low-intensity social contacts*.

3.3.5 The staging of social performance
In the academic world is written extensively about the phenomenon social performance. In most cases however, a different terminology is used, or it is written from a different academic background (performance studies, psychology, etc) than that of the urban studies. As an example, the theories of psychologist Erving Goffman where used already throughout this chapter.
Gehl states that however they may look insignificant (seeing and being seen as unconscious, brief contacts) “yet they are valuable both as independent contact forms and as prerequisites for other, more complex interactions” (Gehl, 1987: 17). Gehl’s pledge for the importance of these small social contacts can be summarised into five points: One: A stepping stone for higher-scale social interactions. Two: an uncomplicated opportunity to maintain already established contacts. Three: offers valuable information about the social environment you’re in. Four: provides a source of ideas and inspiration for action. Five: offers a uniquely stimulating experience. (Gehl, 1987) Gehl doesn’t zoom in to the techniques used when establishing this low-intensity social contacts like Goffman. It merely shows the importance for the urban environment, the functionality of these contacts. Gehl therefore links his research by referring to research conducted by William H. Whyte (The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces) and the research conducted by the Project For Public Spaces but unfortunately doesn’t directly refers to performance theories, like those of Erving Goffman.

The Dutch book ‘Warme Stad’ (‘Warm City’ in English) (Müller, 2002) forms a bridge between these contacts described by Gehl, Whyte, and others, and the theories of performance theorists like Goffman. It describes the city’s functionality from the viewpoint of social sciences, linking it to academic literature of the past, referring extensively to Erving Goffman’s performance theories. However, Müller states that the difference in relation to Goffman’s theories is that the Warm City concept perceives these low intensity social contacts not as cold, standoffish, or fake, but as warm and close. Central again in this concept is the role of the public domain. In the following chapters of the book, the public domain is evaluated as a place to watch, a place for small incidental contacts, a meeting place for strangers, a meeting place for friends and acquaintances, and as an experience space (‘belevenisruimte’ in Dutch) (Müller, 2002: 139).
Either when called the ‘small urban spaces’ (Whyte, 2001), or the spaces ‘between buildings’ (Gehl, 1987) or the public domain (Müller, 2002), evident is that all the various theories about low intensity social contacts (Gehl, 1987) emphasise on the role of the public spaces of the city. Before we continue zooming into that aspect. It is important to formulate a clear definition of ‘public space’, as different definitions are used throughout the different literature:

**Figure 24.** The Warm City concept perceives the low intensity social contacts as warm and close. Photo taken on stairs in front of Sacré-Coeur,

Public Spaces

How to define public spaces? Oosterman searches in the first chapter of *Parade der Passanten* (1993) (*Parade of Passers-by* in English) for a clear, usable definition of the term ‘public space’, the spaces referred to as places for social interaction in an urban context. Oosterman states that seeing public spaces mainly as accessible spaces is insufficient: some of the accessible spaces maybe physically accessible for all (as a highway, or a forest, for example) but are they places for social interaction? According to Oosterman, ‘public’ in Urban Studies often also refers to the public interaction between others. Therefore Oosterman pleads to see public spaces no merely as accessible spaces, but as places where people are accessible for each other. This rather straightforward definition will be used throughout this thesis as well, with an extra focus on the spaces ‘between buildings’ as Gehl states it. So: in this thesis public spaces are defined as the outdoor, accessible spaces of the city, where people are socially accessible for each other. For example: the square on a market day in a medieval city centre, a sidewalk café in Copenhagen, an urban parks in Paris, a pocket park in New York (publicly assessable yet privately owned), the open-air theatre of Regent’s Park, London, etc. However in this thesis no focus is put on the indoor places that also might be public: inside the theatre buildings, free accessible museums, shops, and indoor cafés and restaurants.
3.4 The two performance types related

3.4.1 The model by Schechner & Turner

Performance theorist Richard Schechner, together with cultural anthropologist Victor Turner, studied this relation between daily life and theatrical performance deeply. Turners model of ‘social drama’ was combined with Schechner’s insights about performance, resulting in a chart of this relationship. The chart shows a horizontal division between social and aesthetic drama. Social drama is the drama of everyday life, described as social performance earlier in this paper. The aesthetic drama are the art performances, in this paper described as aesthetic performances. What this chart shows is that the theatrical techniques used by art performances (aesthetic drama) are invisibly used to influence social and political actions in the real world. The outcome of that, however, those outcomes, influence the world of art again, by inspiring them in creating new theatrical techniques. Schechner indicates this by referring to U.S. President at that time, Henry Ford: “Ford takes techniques from the theatre: how to release the news, how to manipulate the public’s reactions, how to disarm his enemies; even how to make-up his face, wear his costume, deliver his sentences.” (1976: 11)

3.4.2 Performative interventions linking the two

Another facet of performance, that was first explored in linguistics by J.L. Austin in 1955 in lectures at Harvard University (Schechner, 2006) is the aspect of performativity.

Performativity

J.L. Austin used the term performative from 1955 to describe statements such as “I bet”, “I apologize” or “I declare war”. In these cases “the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action” (Austin & Urmson, 1978: 6), language does not only describe things, it makes them exist. This understanding has been crucial in many theories beyond linguistics, for instance in gender, performance and urban studies (Harvie, 2009). It raised the understanding many gestures have more impact than just the actions themselves. And that many normal actions, are also normalizing: actively establishing certain behaviours as normal, and others as strange. In the twentieth century this core idea was studied further in urban studies, urban theorists like Lefebvre and Debord studied how cities’ identities are socially produced through the ways we act in them (Harvie, 2009).

These theories inspired the creation of performative interventions in 1960s in the U.S. Often staged in public space, they were first called Happenings by American artist Allan Kaprow (Schechner, 2006). Kaprow stated that one of the qualities of Happenings was that no clear distinction between audience and performers was made, and the line between art and life was “fluid” (Kaprow, Lebel, & Kyōkai, 1966: 88). Some happenings, were so lifelike, that many spectators unintentionally became actors in the happening themselves, reacting on the public incident. Performative
Interventions flourished in the 1960s, and had the ambition to actually make an impact on everyday city life, creating a close link between aesthetic and social performance.

### 3.4.3 Differences remain

Nevertheless, although performance theories tend to generalise all human activity as performance, and the similarities between social and aesthetic performances can be very remarkable, social and aesthetic performance are distinct methods of social interaction. Primarily on the aspect of reality versus illusion. Or as Goffman states in the final parts of the conclusion: “The claim that all the world’s a stage is sufficiently commonplace for readers to be familiar with its limitations and tolerant of its presentation. (...) An action staged in a theater is a relatively contrived illusion and an admitted one; unlike ordinary life, nothing real or actual can happen to the performed characters (...).” (1990: 254)

So by example, Allan Kaprow’s art may be lifelike but, it is not life itself. And although the theatrical techniques used may be similar, but the motivation for performance is in that case different.

### 3.5 Conclusion of sub question 1

The problem statement already introduced the weaknesses of the current relation between social and aesthetic performance, as two performance types that miss out in providing either optimal city centre experiences, or optimal art performance experiences. This sub research introduced the two types from an academic context. At first, the two types where individually researched, resulting in clear definitions, examples and their functionality. Secondly, the two performance types where related, through literature research either similarities and differences were found.

In the research, both kinds of performance are submitted to various aspects in order to understand the differences and similarities between the two. In the conclusion at the end of the chapter a table summarising this is presented.

For the conclusion of this sub question, the research outcome of the two performance types can be schematically summarised. The aspects in the left column are the result of literature research, as is referred to in each box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic elements</th>
<th>Social performance</th>
<th>Aesthetic performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance as</td>
<td>Unconscious</td>
<td>Conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendance as</td>
<td>Unconscious</td>
<td>Often conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spectator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integral audience</td>
<td>Yes, family, friends, close neighbours</td>
<td>Yes, audience of those “in the know” Invited audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidental audience</td>
<td>Yes, passers-by</td>
<td>Yes, new audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily co-presence during performance</td>
<td>Necessary</td>
<td>Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to physical circumstances</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionality in city life</td>
<td>Crucial</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of use of techniques</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique: Use of framing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique: Use of front</td>
<td>Yes, virtually</td>
<td>Yes, physically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique: Use of audience</td>
<td>See: Goffman (1990)</td>
<td>Yes, metaphorically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique: Use of repetition</td>
<td>See: Goffman (1990)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique: Use of performativity</td>
<td>See Schechner (2006)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Duration | Generally continuous | Generally periodic |
| Spread of impact | Small scale\(^1\) | Varying\(^2\) |

---

1 In the case of happenings, flash mobs or other forms of lifelike art, the participant might not always be aware.
2 Physical social performances often are on small scale, between a social performer and a restricted group of attendees. For aesthetic performance it depends on commercial success, material conditions and purpose of performance (repetition, etc.).

What can be concluded from the table above is that a lot of similarities between social and aesthetic performance exist on various aspects. Either in the use of techniques, containing the basic elements, and it’s sensitivity to physical circumstances, both performance types seem quite the same. However, in some aspects the two types differ greatly: intention, attendance and duration.

As for intention, the main reason to perform socially is simply put to maintain & establish personal relations between people in the city, while an aesthetic performance is generally created for a broad range of other unpersonal purposes, such as offering recreation, maintaining a profession (art as a job) or enhancing art communities.

And concerning attendance, a social performances is often executed unconsciously, both by the performer as by the spectator(s). These social interactions just seem to happen spontaneously, naturally, and without role-play. When attending aesthetic performances, in general, these roles are clear and obvious, for example: the performer attends a play by taking a seat, the actor starts performing a few minutes later, after the curtain has raised. However, experimental art performances such as the lifelike-art by Kaprow, tend to experiment with these understandings.

And as for the last difference, duration, aesthetic performance tend to have a clear beginning-end structure. Often resulted by the fact that a story is told from beginning till end, and audiences are often implicitly requested not to leave the room before a ‘show’ has ended. Of course, modern theatre has been experimenting with these traditional understanding since decades, but the duration is generally periodic. When concerning social performance, this is different: while participating in the social domain of a city, an individual is constantly surrounded by strangers and acquaintances, therefore being constantly submitted to the social performances. And although the individual performances established might be short lived and periodic, a person performance continues whenever a new (small or large scale) interaction is established.

**Final note:** For the functionality of this thesis a clear separation between social and aesthetic performance has been used, although there is awareness that in the real situation, both performances might be more ambiguous. There are situations thinkable where social and aesthetic performance are strongly interweaving. For instance, a speech performance given by the local mayor on the public square. Or an acoustic guitar jam session between friends in the park, while passers-by stop and listen. Aesthetic or social? This thesis takes these two performance types as a starting point for research and design, and in order to come with useful results, both types have been researched individually and cooperatively.
4. SECOND SUB QUESTION

4.1 Aesthetic performance

4.1.1 Critical consideration
In Northwestern Europe, a considerable part of the performing arts productions is supported by social investments, made by non-profit organizations like funds or (semi-) governments. Currently, this art sector finds itself in stormy weather. The consequences of a drastic cut in financial recourses became painfully clear the last few years: due to ongoing recession, a change in policy and economic circumstances have made an end to performance organizations all across Northwestern Europe.

With less financial resources, but with undiminating social importance, the sector will be compelled to focus on the core tasks. But how to steer in the right direction? In order to find this focus, a critical consideration of the art performance sector is necessary. This still ongoing consideration has all over Northwestern Europe led to initiatives trying to give direction to these changes. An example of this is was the temporary art platform Koers Kunst providing a platform for new ideas and debates concerning a highly needed transformation of the Dutch art sector (Houben, 2011).

Arts funding in England

Arts Council England is a government funded body dedicated to promote the performing, visual and literary arts in England. Since 1994, the ACE is responsible for distributing lottery funding to local art organisations. In the strategic framework Achieving great art for everyone ACE formulates five long-term goals: excellence, reach, engagement, diversity and innovation (Arts Council England, 2010). Important is further expansion of the impact and enhancement of the sector. However, in recent years, local and national art budgets are dramatically cut. In 2011, due to economic recession, ACE had a third less to spend due to the cuts (Brown, 2011).

How to give shape to these art sector cutbacks on national and local level, is under ongoing political discussion. This political debate, carefully monitored and influenced by those involved in this sector will help to determine the general opinion distilled out of all these arguments. This is not an easy task: if one asks art performance attendees what makes attending plays, shows and concerts so special and rewarding, a large bunch of perceptions is received: art perception is very personal. Central is the reaction that art performance can on one hand make you think, outside the boundaries you set up, but on the other hand can touch, without having to think over. Performing arts, although often experienced in a group, has personal impact, so much is clear.

In the academic world of performance studies a lot has been written about the impact of art performance on the spectator. Performance guru Richard Schechner, articulates this as follows: “The theatre is designed to effect change in perception, viewpoint, attitude: in other words, to make the spectator react to the world of social drama in a new way.” (1976: 12) Adding up to this is the conclusion...
of *Theatre & The City* by Jen Harvie: “Theatre and performance in the contemporary urban context (...) are particularly well equipped to help us think about and enact both material practices and performative visions. They can help us see, for example the social conditions of economic inequality (...) but also the social possibilities of communication, understanding and change within and despite those conditions.” (Harvie, 2009: 78)

An important aspect of the publicly funded performing arts is the belief that making contact with new audience is very valuable for those involved, and enriches society in general. The broader definition for this is ‘cultural participation’ (‘cultuurparticipatie’ in Dutch). The difficult task of reaching people that normally wouldn’t attend performing arts is often commercially less attractive, and therefore social funds are used to stimulate this process.

The main idea is to make new audiences come in touch with the qualities that performing arts can offer: excitement or relaxation, inspiration and of course recreation. But how to achieve this? How to inspire the everyday drama of the ordinary citizen? How to come in contact with this person, unaware of the qualities performing arts can offer?

**Bodily co-presence as initial contact**

Over the past decades, ways of reaching new audiences have been explored, resulting into various techniques and beliefs. The last years, the virtual ways of contact have seen great interest in the performance sector. The use of social media (like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) have led to the exploration of new ways of advertising. This thesis, acknowledges these advantages of the new era, but takes the very essence of an aesthetic performance as a starting point: the bodily co-presence, that Erika Fischer-Lichte wrote about in *The Transformative Power of Performance* (2008) (see chapter 3.2.3). While explaining this concept, Fischer-Lichte refers to Max Herrmann as one of the performance theory pioneers stating that the spectators are involved as co-players, ‘in this sense the audience is the creator of the theatre’ (1981: 19) Fischer-Lichte makes clear that this relation forms the basis for each performance, where the spectator and the performer have an equally important role. (2008)

The only way to experience this relation, this bodily co-presence is through participation. And if the participation is not initiated by the spectator, why couldn’t the performer take the first step? Confronting the spectators-to-be with a performance they haven’t decided to attend in the first place, but might enjoy after all, is a
crucial factor of the Happenings and Flash mobs that we have seen since the 1960s. For instance Kaprow’s beginning of happening “Calling” in 1965 where several people covered in blankets where laying in the Grand Central Station of New York. Passers-by, through their bodily co-presence, and unaware about the fictional character, suddenly became spectators, enabling the performance. Modern versions of this are seen nowadays with flash mobs in busy city centre streets, shopping malls or train stations, where huge crowds are suddenly confronted with surprising choreographies.

This confrontation forms the starting point of this strategy. Demanding a pro-active attitude of the performer in order to contact audiences that otherwise unknowingly would have chosen for other ways of recreation. “The purpose of doing theatre on the streets is to reach people who are unfamiliar with theatre, it therefore can never afford to become too elitist”, wrote Bim Mason in one of the only academic books about street theatre: *Street Theatre and Other Outdoor Performance* (1992: 13). Mason also states that in relation to other forms of recreation that often win from attending a play: the cinema or television, theatre has the great advantage of proximity of the audience and the possibility of interaction with them. (Mason, 1992)

An extra argument for this attendance on the public spaces of the city, is the impact public space has on creativity: Charles Landry states in his book “The Creative City: Toolkit for Urban Innovators” that the public space forms the “heart of the innovative milieu” (2006: 119). The reason that the public realm helps to develop this creativity is because it allows people to go beyond their own circle of acquaintances (family, social and professional relations). “The idea of the public realm is bound up with the ideas of discovery, of expanding one’s horizons, of the unknown, of surprise, of experiment and of adventure.” (Landry, 2006: 119). Except for the aimed increase in reaching new audiences, this active, confronting attitude from the viewpoint of the performer has several other advantages:
4.1.3 The search for performance locations
How many-sided the advantages of this pro-active attitude may be, central in this starting point is the concept of bodily-co-presence. Therefore, the next step would be to research possible locations where the conditions for this bodily co-presence would be optimal. Places where a groups of spectators could be assembled, or are already to be found.

The place, with the ideal conditions for this interaction are the public spaces of the city. These places have been described elaborately in chapter 3 as ‘the outdoor, accessible spaces of the city, where people are socially accessible for each other’. (see box in chapter 3.3.5) That aesthetic performance could make use of this social accessibility is underpinned by Max Herrmann describing performance as a ‘social play’: “So many different participants constitute the theatrical event that its social nature cannot be lost. Theatre also produces a social community.” (1981: 19)

4.2 Social Performance
4.2.1 The influence of aesthetic performance
The model of Schechner makes clear that the world of aesthetic performance has its influence on the world of social performance through theatrical techniques. It is expected that an enhancement of the functioning of the aesthetic performance in the city as described in the previous chapter 4.1 has its effect on the functioning of social performance. From the model can be read that aesthetic performance hidden, unconscious influences the staging of theatrical techniques of the social drama. In other words: enhanced aesthetic performances causes extra input or inspiration for social performance techniques.
4.2.2 Circumstances created by art performances
But the advantages are also present in other ways: aesthetic performance creates great circumstances in these public spaces, resulting in a breeding ground for social performance.

- Aesthetic performance is strongly affected by interpretation and personal taste. Participating to public theatre events is a way of social performance. Showing, profiling others what kind of type you are, what your taste and preferences are. “This is what I like, and this is the community I am part of.” (Schechner, 2006)
- A public event gathers people in usually high concentrations. This raises the chances to interaction (Müller, 2002).
- Participating as a group of performers together on a same activity lowers the barrier to interact. The co-experienced emotions evoked by the performers cause this (Whyte, 2001).
- Attending a performance is a social activity and enhances communities (Harvie, 2009; Herrmann, 1981), creating local difference (Cohen, 2007).

Apart from the relation performer – spectator there is another component that influences social performance. Earlier in this research is stated that the element ‘stage’ plays a crucial factor in the performance. If the location of this ‘stage’ is in this case the public spaces of the city, how should these public places look like in order to optimally function as a platforms for social performance?

4.3 Public theatricality
4.3.1 The strategy
In the first part of this sub research a stronger participation of the aesthetic performance in the public domain of the city is proposed (see chapter 4.1). The second part of the research made clear that this presence of aesthetic performance, in combination with the right urban design, can enhance social performance in the city as well.

This interaction, is in fact a win-win situation for both city life and the performing sector and forms the basis of the strategy of searched for in this sub question. This aimed for strategy enhancing both aesthetic and social performance, will to maintain consistency and clarity be called ‘Public Theatricality‘ throughout the rest of this thesis. This is new term, related to effect of theatricality (a mix of both social and aesthetic performance) and the publicity of the location of this strategy: the public spaces of the city.

Public Theatricality is the strategy that aims to enhance both social and aesthetic performance by establishing a strong relation between the two, strongly positioned on the public spaces of the city. Places of public theatricality are called urban stage throughout this thesis.

4.3.2 Physical conditions
The previous chapter has learnt us that the physical element ‘stage’ is a crucial element in the staging of social and aesthetic performance. So when the public spaces of the city will be used as a stage for social and aesthetic performance then these places need to qualify in order to optimally house this. And if not yet qualified, the places need to be adapted, will this strategy be successful. Urban design of these squares is a tool in order to achieve this. An
An important notice: the presence of aesthetic performance must in all cases not be a precondition for the success of these redesigned public spaces. The conclusion of the first sub question has learned us that the social interaction on public spaces is a continuous activity, but that of the aesthetic performance periodic. Also on the dark and rainy days in autumn these public spaces need to fulfil a role as stages for social performance. And if this seems absent as well, on the most dark and rainy days of the year, then these places should at least guarantee to maintain being safe and comfortable places, over a long period of time.

4.3.3 Costs and benefits
The set of instruments to start with these adaptations is in hands of the manager of the vast majority of the public spaces of the city: the local government (in Dutch: ‘gemeenten’, in the case of England: the city governments). The city governments are responsible for the urban design of cities. The city of Liverpool, for instance has published the “Urban Design Guide” (Planning Service Liverpool City Council, 2003). A book that is used as a guideline for future urban design, setting the ambitions high, defining clearly what Liverpool wants to stand for. Adding an extra chapter on public theatricality, setting this ambition on the agenda would be a great step in enhancing this strategy.

On the financial front a high amount of investment is demanded of the city governments in order to make the urban designs become reality. This would merely mean a shift of money spending, money that is nowadays already spend on fragments of urban designs in the city centre usually lacking coherent design strategies. As for the art performance organisations or individual artists a certain level of investment is inevitable: the art organisations and individual performers used to perform indoors on their well-known stages within the easy-to-control circumstances are now stimulated to perform on the outdoor, highly visible, public spaces of the city. These places would inevitably have a lower level of facilities, asking more inventiveness and greater improvisation skills of the performer.

Whenever this all succeeded, the great advantages will be the result: the public performances are ideal places for first and brief contacts with new audiences, referring them after a short introduction towards the home front: the art performance centres. In that way public performances in the form of short played fragments or linear parades can be given in order to give a ‘sneak preview’ of what can be seen that same evening inside the operas, philharmonics, fringe theatres and playhouses. Once fascinated by the previewed performance, the new spectator is more likely willing to spend money on an entrance ticket. And with a higher box revenue, the income generated by the art organisations will be higher.

In search for optimal techniques to persuade more spectators to attend indoor, paid performances, the efficiency and profitability of art organisations will increase, resulting in higher benefits than the initial costs of this strategy.
4.3.4 The strategy step-by-step
In this sub chapter, the strategy, explained in words in the past pages, will be described step-by-step.

1. **Inventory**
   Determining the networks of social and aesthetic performance existing in the city centre. The network of social performance can usually be obtained by looking at those public places with high concentration of citizens. Places where strangers meet for short-lived interactions, eye contact, a smile, etc. Places could be: city market squares, shopping streets, streets with sidewalk cafés, areas of touristic attraction, river fronts with places to stroll, etc. Except for cities with a strong culture of outdoor theatre, the networks of aesthetic performance concentrate around the performance institutions of the city: the classic opera, playhouse or royal theatre, but also the small fringe theatre, the abandoned building where free art performances are given, or the local theatre group’s small theatre.

Figure 28. Step 0: The existing situation: little social performance and indoor closed off aesthetic performance (see problem statement chapter 1.4).

Figure 29. Step 1: Inventory
2. Anchor Points
Selection of central public places, urban stages, that will function as anchor points of public theatricality in the network. There are various types of public spaces, each having their functionality in the network, varying for instance in centrality, capacity, and crowd attendance. The case study design of Liverpool formed the input for the formulation of these types, and will be experimented further in the design project.

3. Urban Stage Transformation
With the help of urban design criteria for public theatricality, the public spaces are evaluated and if needed redesigned, with the help of the urban design criteria, being the topic of research of sub question 3 (see chapter 5). This redesign will optimise the place for public theatricality: attracting people the place otherwise would have missed out: resulting in increased social performance. These anchor points, as optimal places for public theatricality are called Urban Stages throughout this thesis.
4. **Participation Performing Arts Sector**

   After the redesign of the public spaces is completed, and the social performance of the places is increased, it has become an interesting place for the performing art sector and those involved in the large non-professional field to experiment with these new places for public theatricality. To create new performances on, to publicly rehearse for a coming show, to try-out new parts of performances, or to give a preview of what can be seen inside the theatre, during a paid, indoor performance.

5. **Wayfinding & Referral**

   The last crucial step is first of all the task for the aesthetic performers: due to the performance, the newly attracted audiences would be motivated to invest in this art performance. There are various ways to do this, a well known or notorious, and but not always effective way is asking (in the worst cases begging) for a donation afterwards. But at it would be more profitable if the newly attracted audiences would be tempted to pay for the full-length indoor performances, back at the performance institutions: the theatres, philharmonics, opera’s, fringe theatres, etc. This way of earning back the investment is on the long-term even more profitable, because it expands the group audiences that is familiar with going to art performances, and will be more likely to return again on their own initiative.

   Through urban design focussed on wayfinding, the routing from these anchor points towards the home of the performance institutes will be optimised. This would mean that for instance pedestrian crossings would be adapted, sidewalks widened, and the routing would be highlighted through highly visible elements.
At the end of the strategy, a mutual enhancement is created: not only the social and the aesthetic performance are enhanced, but a further enhancement of one type, would positively affect the other, creating an upwards spiral of public theatricality. For instance: the public aesthetic performances, attract extra spectators to the public squares, resulting in extra social performance. This increased crowds would then make it more attractive for new art organisations to manifest on those squares, resulting again in increased aesthetic performance.

An optimal referral would be guaranteed if also the homes of the performance institutions, the theatre buildings, operas, etc would be adapted with the public theatricality strategy in mind: resulting more inviting architecture, that doesn’t dominate or overwhelm the possible new audience, but actually invites to sense the atmosphere inside, give a insight of rehearsals going on for tonight’s show through windows of the rehearsal spaces. However, this architectural ambition is not part of this urban design research. For new insights on this topic, I can refer to a book: *Beyond The Black Box and the Whyte Cube*, by Idema & Van Herp (2010).

**4.3.5 Conclusion of Sub Question 2**

The second sub question targets at finding a solution for the problems raised in the problem statement. And since the first sub research has led to a better understanding of the two, it is the next step to research solutions.

The sub question doesn’t give direction how this strategic enhancement might be structured, will it be a two sided strategy, or are there possibilities for a collaboration, a mutual enhancement strategy? But through research it becomes clear that both kinds of performance can stimulate each other’s functionality further. The similarities researched in the first sub question form the basis for an understanding that a strategic enhancement might be a collaboration, a combination of the two performance types in space and time.

The first sub question indicated that for social performance, the public spaces of the city form the ideal ‘stage set’ for everyday social performances. The research results in the understanding an attendance of aesthetic performances in these public spaces of the city forms a great condition for a enhancement of both performance types. But in order to fully operate, the right public spaces of the city have to be selected. And those public spaces have to be capable of facilitating both kinds of performances at the same time. This all leads to the belief that a strategic enhancement consists of several consequential steps:

1. **Inventory**
2. **Anchor Points**
3. **Urban Stage Transformation**
4. **Participation Performing Arts Sector**
5. **Wayfinding & Referral**
5. SUB QUESTION 3

5.1 Introduction

What are the criteria of urban design that enhance both aesthetic and social performance in cities?

The answering of the second sub question has resulted in a strategy that transforms the public spaces of the city into stages of public theatricality (see section 3.2.3), forming a cross-pollination between social and aesthetic performance. An important step in this strategy is the physical transformation of the public spaces of the city that function as anchor points in this strategic framework.

This sub question tries to answer the following question: what are the physical aspects to stage public theatricality? With which conditions do these public spaces need to comply?

Aspects, conditions, criteria

In this thesis, conditions are seen as validated aspects (from --- to +++). Aspects as such don’t have any validation included yet. An example to illustrate this difference: If ‘size’ would be an aspect, then ‘big’ or ‘tiny’ would be possible conditions. At the final step of this sub research the conditions are selected that most critical determine the urban design. Being in other words: the main urban design criteria.

5.2 Search for aspects

The first step would be to find these aspects, in order to come up with needed conditions. The aspects found were the result of literature research and case study research. This research resulted in the formulation of nineteen aspects of the places of public theatricality. On the following page, grouped into nine categories (purple), these aspects are ordered schematically (orange-red).

5.2.1 Aspects derived from performance studies

Professor of theatre at Paris-VIII University, Patrice Pavis researched in the book Analyzing Performance (2003) several components of the ‘stage’, that could be seen as aspects of an aesthetic performance. In her research for material elements apparent in performance, she defines several physical and non-physical aspects, or components.

The first aspect being the actor itself, forming the centre of the mise-en-scène. Although this is in fact a physical aspect, it is not one subjective to urban design in such a way that it can be designed. The second aspects partly is: voice, music, rhythm. According to Pavis, none of the other components has quite the same degree of subtlety and resonance as this aspect (2003). The design of for instance a stage set or an arena has great influence on the amplification of the sound produced by the performance, or the external sounds. Thirdly, Pavis defines a combination of three: space, time, action. These three compromise a concrete world and are interdependent on each other. For instance, without space and time, action can’t unfold, and without time space would resemble a painting or photograph. Taking time as a given aspect, logically space and therefore action can be influenced by urban design. This broad aspect however, gives in this research little grip on the exploration of public theatricality aspects.

Concerning the fourth aspect, costumes, Pavis states that it is important when creating the first impression of an actor and his character (2003). However this is again an aspect that is physical, but is not related to the tools of the urban designer. So is the fifth
aspect: **makeup.** According to Pavis it is comparable to a “filter, a film, a fine membrane” that is attached to the face (2003: 181). The sixth aspect that Pavis defines, **objects,** is then again very much related to the set of instruments of the urban designer. Pavis states that objects is actually everything that figures on a stage and is not the actor. This could be either be called props, although this could imply according to Pavis that this is only a secondary tool, belonging to a character. The public spaces of the city are usually full with objects that could function as ‘props’ for aesthetic performance. Pavis defines different “degrees of objectivity” (Pavis, 2003: 186), such as natural objects (such as sand or grass), nonfigurative forms (such as geometric shapes), recycled found objects (such as oil drums), etc. Pavis also defines **lighting** as a component of the stage. Obviously, without lighting performances could be seen by others at all. Within the aspect lighting a difference between natural lighting (the sun, directly or indirectly) and artificial lighting (lamps, fire, etc) can be made.

Bim Mason’s publication *Street Theatre and Other Outdoor Performance* (Mason, 1992) is one of the few academic books zooming into the profession and art form of street theatre. Mason defines several important aspects for the performer to consider when choosing a place to perform. These points could be seen as the main physical criteria for street performance an can be direct input for this research.

The first aspect is real practical one focussed on street theatre: the use of a plane **wall** behind the performer. According to Mason, this is not a crucial aspect, but a very useful one. It protects the equipment of the performer, bounces back sound in the direction of the crowd and prevents distraction. And finally, gives the performer greater surveyability: ability to overview the crowd.

**Sound** is another factor, both the sound received as a performer, and the sound put out. Car traffic, voices, fountains, in-store music, all possible sources that may drown out the aesthetic (or social) performance. Finding the right **performance space** is according to Mason also a hard task, especially in narrow streets where traffic is easily obstructed due to crowds gathering for the performance. While performing, you have little time to control the shape and spread of the crowd.

**Lighting** is also a factor to take into account. It is not only the presence of light, but also the direction is important: performing directly under street light might give a ghastly effect, while performing in the direction of bright sun light will make the performer to squint, losing all important eye expressions. The other way around will make it hard and unpleasant for the audience to see. It is best to let bright sunlight illuminate from the side. Apart from the light, also other **weather conditions** have to be considered. In many cases, a simple shelter can prevent performances to be stopped due to wind, rain, extreme heat, etc. The final aspect Mason indicates are the physical features of the area such as **elevation** and **proximity** to the audience. According to Mason, an amphitheatre situation, with the audience on steps, and the performer below is the ideal situation. “It encloses sound waves an creates a more focused, intimate relationship with the audience” (Mason, 1992: 91).

**5.2.2 Aspects derived from urban studies**

The aspects described above are derived from literature in performance studies. In urban studies, almost none is written about performance and the relation to urban design, let alone physical criteria (see chapter 1.2 societal and academic relevance). However, an article on the website of the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) defines the ten principles for successful squares. Although not focussing on social and aesthetic performance alone, but on the
broader topic of city life, it will be useful to explore which of those principles can be applied to function as public theatricality aspects.

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a non-profit organisation founded in 1975 developed from the work of William H. Whyte (for info about Whyte, see chapter 3), concerned with the design of optimal public spaces. The PPS has publicised in 2005 a document stating the “10 principles for Successful Squares” (2005). The ten points being:

1. **Image and Identity**
   This is a non-physical principle, concerning the perception and use of the square by people in the city. Not within this sub research.

2. **Attractions and Destinations**
   According to PPS any great square is differentiated in a variety of smaller places great places to appeal various people. However, those attractions don’t need to be big in order to turn the place in to a success. In other words: a place needs have differentiation and multi-functionality.

3. **Amenities**
   A square should feature amenities that make it comfortable for people to use. Examples written in the article are street furniture, lighting and public art. A good amenity will help establish “a convivial setting for social interaction” (Project for Public Spaces, 2005). Concerning public theatricality, both amenities for social and aesthetic performance can be defined.

4. **Flexible Design**
   Use of a square changes every day, week and year. To respond to this, flexibility needs to be built in. For instance temporary structures, or on-site storage, to adapt to changes.

5. **Seasonal Strategy**
   A successful square needs to be multi-functional under changing seasonal and weather conditions. Great squares are able to offer activities all year round.

6. **Access**
   To be successful, a square needs to be easy to get to. Most important is accessibility by foot, with streets for car traffic not too wide and crosswalks well marked.

7. **The Inner Square & the Outer Square**
   Concept derived from park planner Frederick Law Olmsted: An active, welcoming outer square is essential to the well-being of the inner square. Streets, sidewalks and buildings around it greatly affect inner square.

8. **Reaching Out**
   PPS states that just as important as the edges of a square are the streets, sidewalks and ground floors of adjacent buildings lead into it. Like the tentacles of an octopus extending into surrounding neighbourhood.

9. **The Central Role of Management**
   According to PPS a management plan that understands and promotes the ways of keeping the square safe and lively is very important. How important this might be, this principle is not related to physical design aspects.

10. **Diverse Funding Sources**
    Because managing and maintaining a square on high quality is very expensive, it is usually beyond the scope of municipalities. Partnerships with other funding sources have then to be found: rents from cafés, markets or other site uses, taxes on adjacent properties, fundraises, etc. This aspect as well, has little physical conditions.
Aspects 1, 9 and 10 are non-material and therefore are less valuable in this research. Yet, the research of PPS makes clear that in order to create successful squares for a longer period of time, these non-material aspects are also very important. However, when searching for physical conditions of public theatricality, they are not useful.

5.2.3 Formulation of categories
Combining the research knowledge derived from the performance studies and urban studies literature, it is possible to define eight broader categories concerning urban design for public theatricality:

- **Position**
  This category mainly deals with the position of the public space in the city.

- **Dimensions**
  What are the physical and programmatic proportions of this public space?

- **Structure**
  Every public space has a different structure, but this category deals with the configuration and physical organisation of multiple elements.

- **Use**
  When the public space is operating, how will it be functioning? Is it able to adapt to changes? Is it multifunctional?

- **Amenity**
  This category, named in the article of PPS (2005) concerns the facilitation of performance: the kind and amount of amenities that are supplied.

- **Acoustics**
  As written in the publication by Pavis, it is a category that has a great sense of subtlety (Pavis, 2003), dealing with sound amplification of wanted sounds and reduction of unwanted sounds (noise).

- **Illumination**
  Derived from Pavis’s book. This category deals with two ways of illumination: natural illumination, and artificial.

- **Attendance**
  Mainly focussing on the participation of the spectator, while ‘amenity’ mainly focuses on the performer. Wow many people can attend, how do they attend, and what is the quality of their stay?
5.2.4 Formulation of aspects & maximised/minimised conditions

The next step would be to formulate the aspects within these eight categories. These aspects are related to the aspects found in the literature described above. Of these aspects a maximised (red) and minimised (orange) condition is formulated briefly. These conditions will be the starting point in the reference research: the following step.

**POSITION**

1. **Publicity**
   The amount publicity, easy-access of the urban space
   
   *Conditions: open to everyone – fully restricted*  
   Related to PPS.org ‘Access’

Publicity is a complex aspect. In the box titled ‘public spaces’ in chapter 3.3.5, a description is given what in this research is meant with public spaces. Public spaces are places where people are socially accessible for each other. In order to be accessible in that way, a place first needs to be open for public access. A gradient of possibilities is given with the understanding that some places may in fact be fully publicly accessible, but might feel closed-off, slightly private. Those places in between the two extremes are sometimes called semi-public spaces. Another quality of publicity is the degree in which the place is publicly known. Public spaces with the highest publicity are usually the places that are well known in the city. Those places can be touristic attractions, or places commonly known as a great place to see and meet others.

2. **Centrality**
   The centrality of the position in the city:

   *Conditions: central – peripheral*  
   Related to PPS.org ‘Reaching Out’

   The amount of centrality is defined firstly by the physical position within the city. Is a place located in the very heart of the centre, or in the outskirts of the city? A second characteristic is the density of use. A central public space plays a role in many activities within the city. A place may be slightly off-central, but if many people visit the place nevertheless, playing an important role in the city, the place has a high centrality.

3. **Connectivity**
   The connectivity with other public places in the city and art performance institutes

   *Conditions: fully connected – fully disconnected*  
   Related to PPS.org ‘Inner/Outer Square’

   One characteristic of connectivity is the amount of physical connections to the place. Streets, alleys, squares in direct connection with the place. But also the connection within a larger network is important: is the place part of a network of other important public spaces? Is there a lot of movement between those spaces, proving the connections are well working? A final characteristic is the connectivity with the performance network. Is the place well connected with art performance institutes?
DIMENSIONS

4. Size
The physical proportions of the place

Conditions: large scale – small scale
→ Related to Pavis ‘Space, time, action’

The size of a place, determines the way of, and the impact on, public theatricality. Small urban spaces give possibilities for a complete different performance, than large open spaces. More important than the general proportions of the place, are the dimensions of the elements the place consists of, relating it to the aspect of differentiation.

5. Programmatic Scale
The programmatic proportions:

Conditions: large scale – small scale
→ Related to Pavis ‘Space, time, action’ & PPS.org ‘Attractions & Destinations’

Although places have their physical restrictions, programmatic scale is not related to physical scale of a place. Boring and uneventful places painfully show that large public spaces, don’t always contain a large programmatic scale. The programmatic scale relates to the amount of different activities provided, and also the capacity of users involved.

6. Elevation
The amount of height difference of ground surface

Conditions: elevated - flat
→ Related to Bim Mason ‘Elevation and proximity’

The amount of elevation is as a physical aspect quite easy to determine. Some places constructed on highly elevated ground have a large general elevation when going from one side to the other. But high elevation can also be obtained by height differences within the place. Elevations may offer great places to overview a place, blocking or providing exciting lines of sight.

STRUCTURE

7. Surveyability
The ability to overview the urban space

Conditions: overviewable – chaotic
→ Related to Bim Mason ‘Back wall’

Surveyability is strongly related to the visual characteristics of a place. Is it easy to overview the place, for instance due to a open design, or height differences? Or is a place a complex structure with lots of hidden places not seen in one glance? Both extremes may offer some feeling of excitement. Are you the one viewing passers-by, or are you viewed from an even more surveyable place by other?
Some places are homogeneous. Having a similar morphology and offering a similar experience on every corner of the place. Differentiation has to do with programme and with shape. Places with a high differentiation are able to offer various activities at the same time, in the proximity of each other.

**USE**

**9. Multi-functionality**

The ability to use the place for more than one purpose

*Conditions: versatile – mono-functional*

→ Related to Pavis ‘Objects’ & PPS.org ‘Flexible Design’

Strictly put: when a place is multi-functional, it is possible to use the place for more than one purpose. Of course, it is hard to think of public spaces that only facilitate one single activity. But places with high multi-functionality offer many possibilities, and tempt users to think of new creative ways. A place can be multi-functional over time, offering various activities throughout the day of year, but a place an also be multi-functional at the same time: offering various activities at the same time.

**10. Transformability**

The ability to transform the place to another use

*Conditions: adjustable – rigid*

→ Related to Pavis ‘Objects’ & PPS.org ‘Flexible Design’

Most public spaces are just rigid, and its physical proportions leave little room for adjustment. However, some elements, like sidewalk cafés can still be quite transformable. Some squares be adapted to house a market, an ice staking event or music concert throughout the year. The trick to high transformability can either be a complex design with movable elements, or a quite simple design with little objects that might block a transformation to another use, like most theatre stages are usually black boxes offering countless possibilities for transformation.

**11. Adaptability to weather**

The ability to adapt to changing weather conditions

*Conditions: flexible - inflexible*

→ Related to PPS.org ‘Seasonal Strategy’ & Mason ‘Weather conditions’

The interpretation of weather adaptability is strongly related to the climate a city is positioned in. In Northwestern-Europe, weather adaptability is quite different than in countries in for instance Southern-Europe where shelter against the sun may be an issue. In Northwestern-Europe it is important to think of a seasonal strategy, offering possibility to use the place also in case of rainy weather or colder days. Ideally, the places would attract passers-by all year round.
Even for the most basic art performances, some amenities are required. To make the place an attractive space for public art performances, it is important to include various amenities of aesthetic performance. Those amenities can be an elevated stage, or a flat performance area, an possible audience, theatrical lighting, a back wall, a space to store props, etc.

In order to attract people to actually visit and make use of the public space, social amenities are of great help. Amenities exist on various levels of complexity. Stairs, for example can offer a great place to sit, if well-proportioned. Other amenities can be a sidewalk café, a place to show off your skating skills. In fact, all elements that might help you to give a great –social- performance.

Cities are noisy places. Urban external sounds can be interfering with the sounds coming from the public spaces themselves. If the noises are unwanted, some effort can be made in order to reduce these sounds, in the form of noise absorption or blocking. The use sound-absorbing materials or vegetation may help.

Sound is a great way of attracting others. The use of music, voices or other sounds may attract passers-by, and make performances more interesting for those already spectating. On the other hand, small sounds can also attract: demanding people to be quiet, listening to the performance. The physical proportions of a place, can either amplify or reduce sounds coming from a performance, like roman amphitheatres can also reduce echo and amplify wanted sounds.
ILLUMINATION

16. Natural illumination
The amount of use of natural lighting

Conditions: fully illuminated - dark
Related to Pavis ‘Lighting’ & Mason ‘Lightning’

The amount of natural illumination depends on the geographical position (proximity to equator), time of day, day of year and to some extend the weather. But most important for this aspect is the way the design is using natural illumination given the lighting conditions of a place. Apart from the amount of light, is the direction important: it can either stimulate or conflict a performance. Sunlight in the viewing direction of the spectators is best, just like a traditional theatre. Direct light in the eyes of spectators can be annoying, making it difficult to stare at a performance for a longer time.

17. Artificial illumination
The amount of use of artificial lighting

Conditions: fully illuminated – dark
Related to Pavis ‘Lighting’ & Mason ‘Lightning’

Related to the weather adaptability, is the use of artificial illumination. In Northwestern Europe in the winter, already in the late afternoon it gets dark. Lighting can make public spaces also pleasant for visit after daylight. The focus of lighting, the brightness of spot, and the light coverage greatly influence the characteristics of a place.

ATTENDANCE

18. Standing capacity
The amount of attendance while standing possible, in relation to size

Conditions: largely – scarcely
Related to Mason ‘Performing space’

This aspects is very straightforward: some places offer a lot of place to stand, and others don’t. This aspect is highly related to size, but also some larger places have very few places to stand: for instance market squares completely covered with outdoor cafés. Or urban gardens with narrow paths, offering little standing place.

19. Sitting capacity
The amount attendance while sitting possible, in relation to size

Conditions: largely – scarcely
Related to Bim Mason ‘Performing space’

As W.H. Whyte proves in his film and publication: people do not need a chair or bench to be able to sit. Well designed stairs, sidewalks or other street furniture can offer great places to sit. Sitting is a great way of pausing, and absorbing the charm of a place. Whyte also proofed that the ability to move a chair slightly, greatly adds to the feeling of comfort.

Figure 34 till 52. The nineteen aspects of public theatricality
The nineteen aspects together with the maximised and minimised conditions are summarised in the table to the right:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories &amp; aspects</th>
<th>Maximised and minimised conditions (;++/---)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Publicity</td>
<td>open to everyone – fully restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Centrality</td>
<td>central – peripheral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Connectivity</td>
<td>fully connected – fully disconnected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimension</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Size</td>
<td>large scale – small scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Program Scale</td>
<td>large scale – small scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Elevation</td>
<td>elevated - flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Surveyability</td>
<td>overviewable – chaotic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Differentiation</td>
<td>differentiated - homogeneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Multi-functionality</td>
<td>versatile – mono-functional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Transformability</td>
<td>adjustable – rigid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Adaptability to weather</td>
<td>flexible - inflexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amenity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Artistic</td>
<td>fully facilitated – bare minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Social</td>
<td>fully facilitated – bare minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acoustics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Noise reduction</td>
<td>full reduction – full amplification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Sound amplification</td>
<td>full amplification – full reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Illumination</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Natural</td>
<td>fully illuminated - dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Artificial</td>
<td>fully illuminated – dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Standing capacity</td>
<td>largely – scarcely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Sitting capacity</td>
<td>largely–scarcely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 Reference research: places of public theatricality

The maximised and minimised conditions start to make more sense when linked to examples where these conditions are present. In the following section the conditions will be linked to several existing public places in order to understand better the impact of these conditions on the success or failure of a public space. These places selected for this research vary in characteristics. Some are well-known examples, some mainly known on a regional scale. Some are positioned within the focus area of this research: Northwestern Europe, others aren’t. Some spaces have proven their functionality over many centuries, others are relatively new.

And as for public theatricality: a large part of the examples researched function in some way or another as places for public theatricality. Some examples however, as will be clear when addressed, are less successful. This division is exactly the goal of this case study research: reference research will be a first step in the research of which *mix of conditions* is needed in order to be able to stage public theatricality optimally. The second research step will be the design process.

### 1. Publicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximised: Union Square, San Francisco (US)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This square is open to all kinds of public all year round, housing larger city festivities, to daily meetings of social performance. It will not be closed-off at night. The square has easy-access to all kinds of travel. A future metro stop on the square is planned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimised: St Luke’s Place, Liverpool (UK)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This garden opened at daytime, giving one place for entrance. The former church building is only open during weekends at daytime, with signature registration needed (for injury liability). The square has a reasonably central position in city, although on the border of the city centre.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Centrality

Maximised: Piccadilly Circus, London (UK)
Within the very heart of London, on the intersection of six main roads lays Piccadilly Circus. A place that was originally well known for its illuminated advertising signs, but still functions as a main tourist attraction and a place to meet.

Minimised: Zollverein, Essen (DE)
A huge former industrial coal site within the German Ruhrgebiet now stated as a UNESCO world heritage site. Houses museums, galleries, outdoor event locations, and indoor performance spaces. Operating solitary. It has no central position within the city, nor a strong connection with it.

3. Connectivity

Maximised: Covent Garden Market, London (UK)
Strongly embedded in pedestrian network of London's city centre. The square connects programmatically with streets that lead to square, filled with street artists and cafés. Also, the sides of the square are in strong programmatic relation with the programme on the centre of the square (the Halls).

Minimised: Schouwburgplein, Rotterdam (NL)
Although one of the main central squares in Rotterdam, the square is poorly connected with city centre. Also the relation between sides of the square and actual heart of the square is poor: barriers prevented connection.
4. Size

Maximised: Piazza San Petro, Vatican City (V)
This immense square was designed so that the greatest number of people were able to see the pope in real person. Because all shapes around square are of extraordinary size, establishing a relation with human scale is difficult.

Minimised: Place in Front of Alice Tully Hall, New York (US)
This small public place consists of stairs and larger blocks to sit on to take a pause or watch a performance. On the corner of the block, in relation with the shape of the Alice Tully Hall, a stand with extra seating places tilts over the sidewalk.

5. Program Scale

Maximised: Covent Garden Market, London (UK)
The Covent Garden Square has a large programme that is also broad: consisting of shops, restaurants, cafés, and places for aesthetic performance (mainly street theatre).

Minimised: Schouwburgplein, Rotterdam (NL)
The square itself houses little more programme than the underground parking garage and the sporadic use by events. The nearby cafés are unable to make use of square for outdoor seating places because of blocking strip of long benches, overlooking an empty square.
6. Elevation

Maximised: Piazza di Spagna, Rome (IT)
With a height difference of roughly 20 meters, the Spanish Steps are a steep landmark in the city of Rome. The Steps consist of several stair segments, dividing the elevation and creating locations to pause and overlook.

Minimised: Plaza Mayor, Madrid (ES)
This central plaza with over two hundred balconies overlooking the square, formed the decor for various activities, such as bullfighting. The square itself is quite simple: rectangular and with no elevation, apart from a central statue of King Philip III.

Maximised: Place de la Défense, Paris (FR)
This place was designed as a continuation of the historical axis Louvre, Champs-Élysées, Arc de Triomphe giving a fantastic overview over the city of Paris. The square itself, is sloping downwards, with little visual obstacles making it internally very surveyable as well.

Minimised: Camden Lock Market, Camden (UK)
A chaotic mix of indoor market halls and outdoor stalls, underneath and along the canal and railway forms the very heart of the flea market of this city, now part of the agglomeration of London. Getting a clear overview of the crowded narrow paths is impossible, but generally perceived as part of its charm.

7. Surveyability

Great view over Arc de Triomphe from Grande Arche
Sloping downwards for extra surveyability
Little visual obstacles on square
Former royal stables now market halls
Chaotic routing through buildings

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8. Differentiation

Maximised: Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland (US)
Although of reasonable size, this square feels intimate due to the use of shapes subdividing it into several spaces with different functionality or impact. Differentiation makes housing of simultaneous activities possible.

Minimised: Lincoln Place, New York (US)
This square in the heart of the Lincoln Centre is designed in the same sober modernistic colour palette as the adjacent buildings. The central fountain as only element is part of the circular shapes in the pavement.

9. Multi-functionality

Maximised: Union Square, San Francisco (US)
This square houses all year round various activities, from aesthetic performances on the public stage, to ice skating in the winter. But the square is also capable for simultaneous multi-functionality: the borders of the square offer places to relax relatively privately while the heart houses more social activities.

Minimised: Waterloo Place, Liverpool (UK)
The place’s current main function is to be a connector in pedestrian route of Liverpool’s city centre. The place houses no permanent square activities, but the square is incidentally used for some temporary events (mainly stalls). The busy road cutting through prevents a further multi-functional use.
10. Transformability

Maximised: NDSM building and Terrain, Amsterdam (NL)
This former shipyard houses many periodic activities such as festivals, outdoor events, flea markets, etc. The building offers room for small creative companies to build their own work spaces. The outdoor space houses little permanent activities that might be standing in the way of transformations.

Minimised: Piazza d’Italia, New Orleans (US)
Although famous for its design, the square is poorly known and used in the city. The aerial shows a striking image of a city-wide outdoor event, that completely ignores the Piazza. The square is merely a place to watch than to attend making it not transformable for other use.

11. Adaptability to weather

Maximised: Covent Garden Market, London (UK)
Despite the highly changeable British weather, Covent Garden is able to house these social and aesthetic performance activities: in the sun in front of the church, due to the rain under the gallery, or in the halls when it’s cold.

Minimised: Plaza in front of Seagram Building, New York (US)
This use of this square, as is shown in W.H. Whyte’s observations, fluctuates heavily during the day: the peak activity is during lunchtime, especially on a sunny day when the sun illuminates the square. At night or in case of bad weather, the square is often desolated.
12. Artistic Amenity

Maximised: Grotekerkplein, Rotterdam (NL)
Since 2009, this square houses a public stage, designed to fully facilitate performances of all kinds. It contains storage room, toilets and a dressing room. It also contains a 70 m long curtain that can completely close the stage off.

Minimised: Speaker’s Corner, London (UK)
The corner of Hyde Park has been a place of open-air public speaking since ages. Traditionally every Sunday, speakers and those interested gather at this piece of pedestrian road within the park. No artistic or other performance facilities are present. Often artists bring their own box to stand on.

13. Social Amenity

Maximised: Oude Gracht, Utrecht (NL)
This medieval city centre forms the ideal stage for social performance, offering places to join the hectic of the city centre, and to step out, and relax from a short distance. The Oude Gracht forms both the main shopping area of Utrecht, and is the heart of the horeca district. The medieval canal can also facilitate various other social activities.

Minimised: Williamson Square, Liverpool (UK)
The social amenities on this square are scarce. Although in the very heart of the city centre of Liverpool and passed by many pedestrians, the square facilitates hardly any social performance.
14. Noise reduction

Maximised: Place de Vosges, Paris (FR)
The heart of the square is a relatively quiet spot in the noisy city centre of Paris. This is because of several elements: the ‘walls’ of houses and trees blocking the noise. Noise created internally (on the square) is absorbed by the trees, grass and gravel.

Minimised: Piccadilly Circus, London (UK)
On this square, on the intersection of several important traffic routes, the noise reduction is minimal. Being an important tourist hotspot the square attracts many tourists increasing volume making themselves heard in the noise. Aesthetic performances on this square are therefore often amplified and non-verbal.

15. Sound amplification

Maximised: Plaza Mayor, Madrid (ES)
The combination of the flat high walls, the empty flat plaza, and the sound reflecting materials, result in a place with a high sound reflection, amplying sounds coming from the centre of the plaza towards the corners. Extra: the over two hundred balconies offer great places to hear the performances, reflected towards above.

Minimised: Paley Park, New York (US)
This pocket park in NY was built as a place of calm and comfort for the public. The waterfall masking the noise from the city and the sounds from the plaza. The ivy and trees further absorb the sounds coming from the plaza.
16. Natural illumination

Maximised: Trafalgar Square, London (UK)
This square makes optimal use of the natural illumination, with not having buildings nearby or objects on square that block illumination from south. The stairs facing south form a great place to sit in the sun, or on the edge of the fountain.

Minimised: Camden Lock Market, Camden (UK)
This largely is an indoor market, with the outdoor stalls being merely roofed. Because the most paths are narrow and compact, the natural illumination hardly has impact on this area.

Maximised: Grand Canal Square, Dublin (UK)
This square in front of the Grand Canal Theatre is a continuation of the shapes and lights of the theatre building. In the evening, the light spectacle shows the surrounding area that the theatre is found there.

Minimised: Plaza in front of Seagram Building, New York (US)
On the square itself no artificial lighting source can be found. After sunset, the square is illuminated by the Seagram building’s transparent first floor and the street lighting. But because this square in business area is merely used in daytime, this is acceptable.

17. Artificial illumination

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18. Standing capacity

Maximised: Puerta del Sol, Madrid (ES)
As the central big square of the capital city, it is the central point of various national manifestations and demonstrations with large standing crowds. But the square is also capable of housing other activities with large standing crowds during festivities or on a touristic day.

Minimised: Grote Markt, The Hague (NL)
The old market square in The Hague is almost completely covered with places to sit. Only a small strip of standing places can be found near the shopping street, resulting in a square with little standing capacity.

Maximised: Bryant Park, New York (US)
Bryant Park during lunch time and on a sunny day is crowded with people sitting. The park offers various possibilities: lying or sitting in the grass. Sitting on the several green chairs with tables in the field, or on the benches alongside it. The park also houses an outdoor coffee place with places to sit.

Minimised: Place de la Concorde, Paris (FR)
This huge car dominating square forms the bridge between the Jardin des Tuileries (of the Louvre) and the Av. Des Champs Élysées and is therefore part of a touristic pedestrian route. However, on the entire square, no sitting places can be found, making it a square for passing-through traffic.

19. Sitting capacity

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The overview list of the reference research is given in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical aspect</th>
<th>conditions maximised in example (+++)]</th>
<th>conditions minimised in example (---)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Publicity</td>
<td>Union Square, San Francisco (US)</td>
<td>St. Luke's Place, Liverpool (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Centrality</td>
<td>Piccadilly Circus, London (UK)</td>
<td>Former coal factory site ‘Zollverein’, Essen (DE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Connectivity</td>
<td>Covent Garden Market, London (UK)</td>
<td>Schouwburgplein, Rotterdam (NL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Size</td>
<td>Piazza San Pietro, Vatican City (V)</td>
<td>Place in Front of Alice Tully Hall, New York (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Program Scale</td>
<td>Covent Garden Market, London (UK)</td>
<td>Schouwburgplein, Rotterdam (NL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Elevation</td>
<td>Piazza di Spagna, Rome (IT)</td>
<td>Plaza Mayor, Madrid (ES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Differentiation</td>
<td>Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland (US)</td>
<td>Lincoln Centre Plaza, New York (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Multi-functionality</td>
<td>Union Square, San Francisco (US)</td>
<td>Waterloo Place, Liverpool (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Transformability</td>
<td>NDSM building &amp; terrain, Amsterdam (NL)</td>
<td>Piazza d’Italia, New Orleans (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Adaptability to weather</td>
<td>Covent Garden, London (UK)</td>
<td>Plaza in front of Seagram Building, New York (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Artistic amenity</td>
<td>Grotekerkplein, Rotterdam (NL)</td>
<td>Speakers Corner, London (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Social amenity</td>
<td>Oude Gracht, Utrecht (NL)</td>
<td>Williamson Square, Liverpool (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Sound amplification</td>
<td>Plaza Mayor, Madrid (ES)</td>
<td>Paley Park, New York (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Artificial illumination</td>
<td>Grand Canal Square, Dublin (UK)</td>
<td>Plaza in front of Seagram Building, New York (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Standing capacity</td>
<td>Puerta del Sol, Madrid (ES)</td>
<td>Beestenmarkt, Delft (NL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Sitting capacity</td>
<td>Bryant Park, New York (US)</td>
<td>Place de la Concorde, Paris (FR)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reference research already indicated conditions that caused success or failure of places for public theatrality. So are for instance low programmatic scale and low social amenity conditions that negatively affected public theatrality. On the other hand, the lack of artistic amenities doesn’t necessarily mean public theatrality can’t be present: the reference research of Speakers Corner proved that.

In order to get a better understanding of which of the 38 (2x19) conditions are crucial for public theatrality, a research-by-design strategy is used. In a design project, experimentation and testing of these conditions is possible through concepts and preliminary designs. Therefore, the design projects functions as a test case providing valuable input for the research, but at the same times provides a valuable design for the inner city of Liverpool, derived from a local analysis.

The writings on this sub question will be finalised in chapter 8, after chapter 7 containing the design project.
DESIGN
DESIGN
6. CITY ANALYSIS

6.1 Liverpool as case study

The selection of Liverpool as case study is not a consequential result of the research part of the graduation project. However, as a test case city, a place to experiment with the urban design conditions, certain aspects would be valuable. First would be the presence of a Performing Arts scene, consisting of at least one academy or art school teaching performance. The city of should be of reasonable size (+500,000) and there should be room and possibilities for city centre development (unlike in medieval centres where cultural heritage is protected). At last, concerning Northwestern Europe, the city should be positioned in sea climate, resulting in a design challenge with relatively little sun hours on a yearly basis. This selection criteria led to the selection of Liverpool (UK) as the city for the design project.

6.2 Introducing Liverpool

Liverpool is a city situated in North West England, in the metropolitan borough of Merseyside. In 2006 Liverpool had a population of 445,200. Liverpool houses one of the main harbours of the country and therefore has had a long tradition of handling cargo. Since historically a large part of the workforce was active in the harbour, the city’s economy was very much relying on handling international transport to for instance cities like Manchester that had large industries. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, Liverpool’s role as port brought the city not only wealth, but also severe poverty and striking divisions between rich and poor. Unlike large industrial cities such as nearby Manchester, Liverpool had little manufacturing industry, and the city’s port activity was dependent upon an extensive and generally unskilled labour force.

Fluctuations in trade and the brought chronic unemployment and deprivation to the city’s working classes, most of whom lived in unhealthy conditions. (Cohen, 2007) After the collapse of the so called ‘Fordist’ economical system in the 1970s, and due to containerization and a change in international trade distribution, Liverpool entered a phase of economic decline more severe than that experienced by any other British city, losing jobs and people at rates that were exceptional even among the industrial cities of the north. (Cohen, 2007) At its peak in 1932 Liverpool had a population of 846,101, after which it continually dropped to the current level of 445,200. After several years of decline, the city’s economy has seen somewhat of a revival since the mid 1990s.
On cultural aspect, Liverpool has always been a city of music. It is regarded by Guinness World Records as the World Capital of City Pop, since musicians from the city have produced 56 number one singles, more than any other city in the world. One of the most successful bands of that genre are the Beatles, that started performing in Liverpool. In 2008, the city celebrated the fact that it was European Capital of Culture. This international attention boosted the development of large cultural institutions in between the cultural heritage docks, such as the construction of the Liverpool Museum.

6.3 Liverpool city centre

Choice of location
The city centre of Liverpool will be the focus of the design. It is the city’s centre where a high concentration of pedestrians, passers-by, might unintentionally be attracted to the urban design projects on the plazas and streets. In order to make a good performance, a sufficient amount of audience is needed, this counts for the performances both aesthetic and social. As for the social performance, it is the city’s centre where a high concentration of strangers create ideal circumstances for self-expression of the theatrical kind. Jonathan Raban already referred in Soft City to this phenomenon: because in the city we are constantly surrounded by strangers, we start to turn the people we meet into stereotypical roles, “turning our lives and theirs into a formal drama” (Raban, 1974: 26)

For the aesthetic performances was already stated in the problem statement that a weak connection between the performing arts sector and the public domain is seen. The city centre is the best location for establishing a renewed connection with citizens, since this is the place where the highest concentration of possible audiences is passing-by. It is the place where you have the highest chance to find those people that are not intentionally seeking for performing arts at the moment, but might be surprised and fascinated after all.

Figure 73. Characteristics of Liverpool

Characteristics
After having visited Liverpool last November for the first time, I concluded a number of characteristics. Note that these characteristics are stated based on a three-day visit, and not on extensive literature research.

For a large city, Liverpool has a quite compact city centre. All the main attractions of the city centre fit within a one kilometre circle, making the city quite easy to walk. For that reason, almost all of the city’s public transport is used for linking the city centre with the widespread suburbs, hardly any inner-city transport is needed.
A second aspect, in relation to that: Liverpool is a very attractive city to walk in because large parts of the centre are made free from car traffic. Almost the entire shopping district, and large parts of the harbour front are pedestrian-only areas.

When strolling from one area to another it is striking to see that within the shopping districts, the areas are fragmented in building age and target group. Recently a new fragment was added to the puzzle: Liverpool One, a huge new shopping centre that is positioned next to a 1950s shopping area with a completely different target group, stores and level of attractiveness.

Liverpool’s past of harbour activity makes that almost the entire city centre has been built over. Now that over time, many of these areas have already been transformed, in the area of Ropewalks, many of the old warehouses in brick are still present. It makes that the city has very little green. In the 1-kilometer circle only two green areas can be found: the St John’s Gardens next to the St George’s Hall and the newly built Chavasse Park in Liverpool One. For the rest, the city mainly consist of blocks that have strict contours, completely aligned to each other. The blocks usually have chaotic insides, as can been seen from aerial photography, that can be reached through narrow and dark alleys, sometimes closed off from the public. In Liverpool it seems quite easy to park cheaply, the many urban voids in the city, empty plots on which once brick warehouses stood, are quite often turned into parking lots. Those voids make that there are many possible places for further development and densification of the city, if wanted.

And last, a large mix in building styles and age can be found, even in the areas appointed as UNESCO Cultural Heritage. In some streets, new developments, old warehouses, and Victorian grandeur are situated next to each other. This gives the city give an dynamic and every-changing attitude, not being a fossil or museum piece that holds on to a moment of the past, but a city of constant change that integrates old architecture with current developments.
7 THE STRATEGY APPLIED TO LIVERPOOL

7.1 Step 1: Inventory
In chapter six a brief introduction to Liverpool, and Liverpool city centre was given. In this section, this inventory will continue. The city centre of Liverpool can be divided into several areas, as shown on the following image:

Figure 74. Map of Liverpool city centre indicating the urban quarters
Inventory Social Performance
The first sub research has learned us that the places for social performance, are the public spaces of the city where people are socially accessible for each other. The public spaces with the highest concentration of people are the places with the most (potential) social performance. In the image below these public spaces are visualised in orange. The thicker the line, the higher the density of people, the more social performance. Input for this visualisation is estimated, based on personal visits to the city centre of Liverpool:

Inventory Aesthetic Performance
An inventory of the places for aesthetic performance can be made by locating the current art performance centres in the city centre. This is visualised with turquoise stars. In the city centre, clearly two groups of performance centres can be defined. The large, more traditional theatres, opera houses, and halls are found in the Cultural Quarter. The contemporary, smaller, fringe theatres are found in the area around Hope Street:

Figure 75. Social Performance inventory in Liverpool
Figure 76. Aesthetic Performance inventory in Liverpool
7.2 Step 2: Anchor Points

Selection of public spaces
In this step the public spaces that will function as anchor points will be defined. These anchor points establish a strong link between the areas of social performance and the performance institutions. In this case study research, the following three areas are defined, all three having different specifications. The north location can establish a strong link with the Cultural Quarter, the eastern location can do the same with Hope Street quarter. The middle location will become a central hub, referring potential audience in the direction of the eastern area. These three areas are places where the public theatricality concept will be first established, having its influence on the entire city.

Figure 77. Places for public theatricality highlighted in purple
7.3 Step 3: Urban Stage Transformation

Designing the public spaces
After selection, the public spaces will be transformed towards places of public theatricality. In future design projects, where this strategy is applied, this can be done with the help of the urban design criteria of public theatricality. This design project functions as a case study, where the generic criteria will be derived from.

With the help of the nineteen aspects, and the 38 conditions related to the referential research projects, the case study will be executed.

In the next three chapters, the urban stage transformation of three places in step 2 will be presented. In chapter 8, these designs will be evaluated as a continuation of the research project.

Figure 78. Places for public theatricality to be redesigned are highlighted in purple
7.4 Williamson Square

Existing situation in images

Fig 79. One of the few city centre squares of Liverpool

Fig 80. Recent adaptations have made the square more chaotic, uninviting.

Fig 81. Square not inviting to stay, people pass by.

Fig 82. High opportunity as a place to pause, relax and watch
Existing situation in map
Scale: 1:500
Figure 83.
Future situation
Scale 1:500
Figure 85.
Future situation: below street level
Scale 1:500
Figure 86.
Perspective future situation
Birds eye perspective
Figure 87
Perspective future situation
Birds eye perspective
Figure 88
Perspective future situation
Eye level perspective
Figure 89
Detail future situation
Benches along south side of square
Scale 1:100
Figure 90
7.5 Waterloo Place

Existing situation in images

Figure 91. Abandoned Lyceum, and unused Waterloo Place

Figure 92. Deteriorated Liverpool Central Shopping Mall

Figure 93. Confusing wayfinding Liverpool Central & city streets

Figure 94. Waterloo Place is weak link in connection Church St - Bold St.
Existing situation in map
Scale: 1:1000
Figure 95.
Concept
Scale: 1:1000
Figure 96.
Future situation in map
Scale: 1:1000
Figure 97
Perspective future situation
Birds eye perspective
Figure 99
Perspective future situation
Birds eye perspective
Figure 100
Perspective future situation
Eye level perspective
Figure 101
Detail future situation
Intersection Waterloo Place through tunnel by night – part 1 of 4
Scale 1:200
Figure 102
Detail future situation
Intersection Waterloo Place through tunnel by night – part 2 of 4
Scale 1:200
Figure 103
Detail future situation
Intersection Waterloo Place through tunnel by night – part 3 of 4
Scale 1:200
Figure 104.
Detail future situation
Intersection Waterloo Place through tunnel by night – part 4 of 4
Scale 1:200
Figure 105
Detail future situation
Intersection tunnel (detail of large 1:200 intersection)
Scale 1:50
Figure 106
7.6 St. Luke’s Place

Existing situation in images

Figure 108. Church as anchor point / landmark of Ropewalks area

Figure 109. Church as platform for local initiatives

Figure 110. Garden as place for rest and tranquillity
Existing situation in map
Scale: 1:1000
Figure 111
Future situation in map
Scale: 1:1000
Figure 113
Perspective future situation
Birds eye perspective
Figure 115
Perspective future situation
Birds eye perspective
Figure 116
Perspective future situation
Eye level perspective
Figure 117
Intersection future situation
Intersection through new plaza & church
Scale 1:100
Figure 118
Details future situation
Scale 1:25
Figure 119

Detail A +B Details of brick stairs of St. Luke (intersection)
Figure 120. Detail C of brick stairs of St. Luke (top view) 1:25
7.7 Step 4: Participation Performing Arts Sector
The fourth step in the five-step strategy focuses on management and cooperation by local organisations, and not on urban design.

In order to turn the locally applied strategy (in this case Liverpool) into a success, a strong cooperation with the local performing arts sector is crucial.

The first step towards this cooperation is made in the first step of this strategy: an inventory of the local performing art organisations (theatres, philharmonics, fringe theatres, etc) is made.

The performing art organisations potentially involved in this strategy:

In the Cultural Quarter Area:
- Liverpool Playhouse
- Royal Court Theatre
- St. George’s Hall
- Empire Theatre
- O2 Arena

In the area around Hope Street:
- Everyman Theatre
- The Annexe
- Royal Philharmonic
- Unity Theatre
- Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts (LIPA)

After the redevelopment of the three squares is completed, the performing arts organisations suddenly have opportunities for performance. For these organisations it’s attractive, because these three public spaces are designed in strong relation to the nearby art centres. And in addition to that, the attractive social amenities on those public spaces resulted in high concentrations of potential audiences.

The kind of performances made are infinite. It is up to this art sector to surprise and attract new audiences with always new and inventive performances. For instance, a public rehearsal can be made in the glass studio’s in Williamson Square. A short preview can be given in on the steps in front of the lyceum at Waterloo Place. Or a full length performance could be created in and around the church of St Luke’s.
7.8 Step 5: Wayfinding & Referral
The final step in the strategy would be the linking of the performance institutions with the three public spaces.

An important component of this step would be the visual and verbal stimulation by the aesthetic performers, performing on these places to try and interest many people, possibly just passers-by, to actually attend a full-length performance at the performance institutions. This public theatricality strategy doesn’t propose the indoor performances should be diminished: the existing performance locations offer great places for performance, once the wider audience is attracted through this new strategy.

Physical components of this fifth step focus on the wayfinding. The streets along the routes, are redesigned focussed on passenger traffic. Pedestrian crossings are created or repositioned, where possible sidewalks are widened. The centre street between Waterloo Place and St Luke’s, Bond Street, is even completely pedestrianised.

Apart from these adaptations on the streets, new street furniture is implemented. Along the route, specially designed theatrical spotlights highlight the route the audiences-to-be would take. Secondly, old, dysfunctional phone booths are coloured in distinctive colour (for instance purple) working as distinctive objects marking the route. These phone booths can then also function art exhibition, or even small performance spaces.
Details future situation
Theatrical lighting and coloured phone booths as routing elements in Liverpool City centre
Scale 1:25
Figure 122
8. URBAN DESIGN CRITERIA

8.1 Design project as case study research

8.1.1 Three types

In this chapter, the sub research for the urban design criteria for public theatricality continues. In chapter 5 a beginning was made with this sub research, but input from the design project located in the city of Liverpool, was needed in order to answer the third research question. As the design was presented in chapter 6 and 7, it is not time to continue the research part.

As was explained before, the design projected functioned as a case study. In order to find the generic urban design criteria, the design in Liverpool city centre is used to extract it from.

When looking at the design result, it is evident that the three public spaces have a different outcome. This is due to the fact that they already had different preconditions (positions, size, etc) before the transformation was started. But most importantly: their intended role in the city network is different. When looking at these three spaces, it is possible to distillate three different types of urban stages (as these places of public theatricality are also called).

- Williamson Square could be defined as a ‘Central City Stage’: City’s main activity square. Exciting central point in the city, all year round for all living and visiting the city. The city square as a stage. Exemplary typologies this square could be compared with:
  - Main city square, pedestrianised
  - Central squares with several outdoor cafés and other social performance amenities

- Waterloo Place could be defined as a ‘Passer-by Runway’: One of the main city connectors of pedestrian traffic, but where people meet, is performance. The city street as a runway of those passing by. Exemplary typologies are:
  - Urban waterfront and seaside promenades
  - Main city boulevards, pedestrian avenues
  - Routes towards transport hub

- And at last, St Luke’s Place could be defined as ‘Performance Enclave’: One of those public, yet slightly tucked away places of the city. A place out of the hectic of the city, related to the art performance institutions. A place to meet socially and artistically. The city enclave as a performance breeding ground. Exemplary typologies:
  - Urban parks, gardens
  - Less central squares

In chapter 5, nineteen physical aspects of public theatricality have been defined. With the formulation of a maximised and minimised condition in total 38 conditions have been created. As a last step of
that chapter, each of the 38 conditions have been related to a referential design project, resulting in a better understanding of the physical outcomes of these conditions.

In order to extract in which way the nineteen aspects were used in the design, the three public spaces are evaluated on each of the nineteen aspects. Are the aspects found in maximised (+++), or minimised condition (---) or somewhere in between?

On the following three pages the extraction design aspects on the three urban designs is visualised. The aspects that were used in a maximised/minimised condition (either +++ or ---) are highlighted, and marked with a purple border.

(following three images: figure 126 – 128)

**Legend**

- Place of social performance
- Place of aesthetic performance
- Places for both: public theatrality
- Type: Central City Stage
- Type: Passer-by Runway
- Type: Performance Enclave
- Wayfinding & referral

Figure 125. Updated Strategic Framework, showing the three types of places of public theatrality located in the city centre of Liverpool.
Standing capacity: Lot of pedestrian traffic, yet possible near lyceum

Natural illumination: Partly sunny, because of tunnel and buildings

Multi-functionality: Although mainly for pedestrian traffic

Publicity: Highly public street & place

Sound Amplification: Because of buildings and lowered ‘runway’

Artistic Amenities: Many places to stand, little facilities

Noise reduction: No reduction

Surveyability: Optimal surveyability

Program scale: Modest scale

Elevation: Lot of elevation but gradual

Social Amenities: Shops and places to pause and watch

Artificial illumination: Exciting lighting in tunnel and above

Sitting capacity: Large capacity along ‘runway’

Transformability: Little objects that can be altered

Centrality: One of the main city centre streets

Connectivity: Central hub

Weather Adaptability: Partly covered, but no extra amenities
Connectivity: linked with performance institutions

Social Amenities: Many, places to sit, outdoor café

Publicity: Publicly accessible, but tucked away

Surveyability: consists of several places, but surveyable

Artificial illumination: Many options for art performance lighting

Standing capacity: Smaller groups, few hundred

Differentiation mix of several elements & places

Artistic Amenities: Church choir full of facilities

Noise reduction: Church, amphitheatre and trees block noise

Elevation: amphitheatre, use of natural elevation

Natural illumination: Not too sunny, due to church and trees

Program scale: small, bottom-up scale

Sound Amplification: Church and amphitheatre amplify sounds

Multi-functionality: church and outside can be used in various ways

Size: small urban place

Centrality: bit off-route in centre

Weather Adaptability: Temporary roofing in church possible

Transformability: arrangement in and around church can be changed
The conditions in which the aspects were found in the three urban designs are also stated in the table below. All the aspects, found in a minimised (---) or maximised (+++) condition have been coloured:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical aspect</th>
<th>Williamson Square</th>
<th>Waterloo Place</th>
<th>St Luke’s Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Publicity</td>
<td>+++ (highly public square)</td>
<td>++++ (highly public street and place)</td>
<td>++ (although more tucked away)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Centrality</td>
<td>+++ (the new main city square)</td>
<td>++++ (one of the main city centre streets)</td>
<td>+ (within the centre, but slightly off road)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Connectivity</td>
<td>++++ (linked in social and artistic network)</td>
<td>++++ (central hub)</td>
<td>++++ (linked with performance institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Size</td>
<td>+ (modest square)</td>
<td>++ (quite large structure)</td>
<td>- (small urban space)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Program Scale</td>
<td>++ (large for Liverpool)</td>
<td>+ (modest scale)</td>
<td>- (small, bottom-up scale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Elevation</td>
<td>++ (steep, stairs and bridge)</td>
<td>++ (lot of elevation, but gradual)</td>
<td>+ (use of natural elevation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Surveyability</td>
<td>++ (good surveyability)</td>
<td>+++ (optimal surveyability)</td>
<td>+ (consists of several elements, places)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Differentiation</td>
<td>+++ (can facilitate several activities at once, activities of various sizes)</td>
<td>+ (quite homogeneous, with several shapes and places)</td>
<td>++ (a mix of several elements and places)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Multi-functionality</td>
<td>+++ (open square can be used for many activities)</td>
<td>+++ (although mainly for pedestrian traffic)</td>
<td>+++ (church and outside can be used in various ways)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Transformability</td>
<td>+ (the central area can be altered)</td>
<td>+/- (little objects that can be altered)</td>
<td>++ (arrangement in and around church can be changed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Adaptability to weather</td>
<td>++ (indoor and outdoor spaces, roofed podium, etc)</td>
<td>- (Partly covered but no extra amenities for weather protection)</td>
<td>+/- (temporary roofing possible in church)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Artistic amenity</td>
<td>++ (stage, sunken plaza as theatre)</td>
<td>+ (many places to stand, little facilities)</td>
<td>+++ (church choir full of facilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Social amenity</td>
<td>+++ (outdoor cafes, place to pause, see and be seen)</td>
<td>++ (shops and places to pause and watch)</td>
<td>+++ (Many, places to sit, outdoor café)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Noise reduction</td>
<td>+ (because sunken plaza + trees)</td>
<td>- (no reduction)</td>
<td>++ (because of lowering + church + vegetation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Sound amplification</td>
<td>++ (because of arena effect)</td>
<td>+ (because of buildings, and lowered ‘runway’)</td>
<td>++ (because of half circle / church)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Natural illumination</td>
<td>+ (sunny, but less because of depth)</td>
<td>+/- (partly sunny, because of buildings and tunnel)</td>
<td>- (little sun, because of church and vegetation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Artificial illumination</td>
<td>++ (continuous lighting at night time)</td>
<td>++ (exciting lighting in tunnel and above)</td>
<td>++ (many options for art performance lighting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Standing capacity</td>
<td>++ (around the arena, or in front of the podium)</td>
<td>+ (lot of pedestrian traffic, yet in front of lyceum building),</td>
<td>+ (smaller groups, but few hundred max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Sitting capacity</td>
<td>++ (on both stairs, and benches/chairs above)</td>
<td>+++ (large capacity along ‘runway’)</td>
<td>+ (few hundred max)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the design process, some presumption existed on the use of the various aspects of public theatricality. Although, the research outcome had only led to a preliminary list of aspects, the testing of the design concepts through varying with the various aspects, gave insight which aspects were of great impact of public theatricality, and which had less. It also led to the understanding of new aspects that hadn’t been formulated yet, such as adaptability to changing weather conditions.

At the end of the design phase, nine aspect can be selected that have been used maximally to design the squares (1,2,3,7,8,9,12,13 and 19), highlighted in the table. The design process has proven that design in relation to these nine aspects was a crucial precondition towards a place of public theatricality. In other words, it proved necessary to design maximised conditions for instance for multi-functionality in order to come up with designs that fully enhanced public theatricality. These important conditions are called main criteria throughout this thesis.

Main criteria for strategic framework
As might became clear, some of these necessary preconditions cannot be designed. Publicity (1), Centrality (2) and Connectivity (3), however very valuable criteria, are not design criteria. These three have proven to be valuable preconditions for the strategic framework, leading towards the selection of the city squares with the highest possibility. These criteria are the square selection criteria. Important notice is that the exact criteria varies per type of square, depending on the functionality in the strategic framework (see chapter 6.2). For instance, St Luke’s place has only Connectivity fully maximised.

Main criteria for urban design
The other six, Surveyability (7), Differentiation(8), Multi-Functionality(9), Artistic amenity(12) Social amenity(13), Sitting capacity (19) have been of importance for the urban design of the squares. For these urban design criteria it becomes clear that each square has its own combination of criteria: the table shows that a high Multi-functionality and high Social Amenity are the only two criteria shared by two squares, the other two are found in only one square. It is therefore necessary to zoom in again, looking at the specific conditions for the three square types.

8.2 From specific to generic
As explained in the previous chapters, the three designed squares all functioned in a different way in the strategic framework, all having their own existing context, program and location in the network. Because these three squares represent the three typologies described in the previous chapters, effort can be made to extract generic research outcome out of the specific designs. What can be said generally about the three types of squares?

This generic research outcome is schematised in the following schedule:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Central City Stage</th>
<th>Passer-by Runway</th>
<th>Performance Enclave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role in strategic framework</td>
<td>City’s main activity square. Exciting central point in the city, all year round for all living and visiting the city. The city square as a stage.</td>
<td>One of the main city connectors of pedestrian traffic, but where people meet, is performance. The city street as a runway of those passing by.</td>
<td>One of those public, yet slightly tucked away places of the city. A place out of the hectic of the city, related to the art performance institutions. A place to meet socially and artistically. The city enclave as a performance breeding ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation in design</td>
<td>● Williamson Square Design Proposal</td>
<td>● Waterloo Place Design Proposal</td>
<td>● St Luke’s Place Design Proposal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Exemplary typologies |  ● Main city square, pedestrianised  
  ● Central squares with several outdoor cafes and other social performance amenities |  ● Main city boulevards, pedestrian avenues  
  ● Routes towards transport hub  
  ● Urban waterfront and seaside promenades |  ● Urban parks, gardens  
  ● Less central squares |
| Exemplary designs (references) |  ● Union Square, San Francisco (US)  
  ● Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland (US) |  ● Canal St Martin, Paris (FR)  
  ● Seaside promenade, Brighton (UK)  
  ● Oude Gracht, Utrecht (NL) |  ● Speakers Corner  
  ● Open Air Theatres like Regent’s Park, London (UK)  
  ● Paley Park (for social performance) |
| Kind of social performance | The place to see, and bee seen by the most people. Both those attending and passing-by. Also a place to meet acquaintances. Therefore: both the smaller and larger scales of social contact. | Place to see many people briefly passing-by, while self in a hurry, or taking a pause on stairs. Suitable for lowest scale of social contact. | Out of the hectic of the city. A place to meet others alike, known and unknown. Forming of communities. Suitable for larger scales of social contact. |
| Kind of aesthetic performance | Suitable for city festivities of various scales that might attract large groups and crowds. | Briefly, short-performances of that don’t acquire many facilities, or a long attendance or tranquillity. (E.g. Short acts of street theatre, street music, street dance) | Suitable for longer performances of medium scale (plays, music shows and dance performances). Important is strong link and referral towards performance institutions of the city. |
| Main urban design criteria: | 1. **Attractive social amenities:** Attractive and inviting designs inviting people to participate in the public theatricality.  
  2. **High multi-functionality**  
    - A square for all, attendees of all kinds  
    - Establishing bodily co-presence of aesthetic and social performance through simultaneous activity  
    - Seasonal strategy  
  3. **High differentiation:** Some heterogeneity in design to be able to facilitate several activities at once, and flexibility for activities of various sizes. A complex design, yet coherent. | 1. **High surveyability**  
   In order to see others pass-by on or along the ‘runway’, the ability to oversee the space well is crucial.  
  2. **High sitting capacity**  
   No runway without audience. The sitting place offer a short pause in shopping area, to watch others pass-by. | 1. **Attractive social amenities:** Attractive and inviting designs inviting people to participate in the public theatricality  
  2. **High multi-functionality**  
    - A street for all, attendees of all kinds  
    - Establishing bodily co-presence of aesthetic and social performance through simultaneous activity  
    - Seasonal strategy  
  3. **Attractive art amenities:** Mix of social and performance amenities to stimulate attendance and development of social network. |
What is important to notice is that more than just the few criteria above have impact on public theatricality. The research in this thesis has led to nineteen aspects, and the first table of this chapter had indicated that all nineteen aspects were present in the three designs. The table above is therefore again a simplification, just as Schechner’s performance diagram was, focussing on those conditions that where maximised (either +++ or ---) in the design, resulting in the several criteria that have been crucial elements of the design.

8.3 Conclusion of sub question 3
In this sub research chapter, the different preconditions of the three typologies are researched more deeply. This was done through design of a case study project in the city centre of Liverpool. In some extend, all the nineteen physical aspects were to be found in the three designs, although the conditions in which they were present, varied strongly (from +++ to --). The nine aspects that were found in maximised conditions in the designs (either --- or +++ in the table) determined the outcome of the three designs most strongly. Three of these nine can be seen as main strategic framework criteria, focussing on the network level. The other four are used in the formulation of the main urban design criteria. For each typology a different combination of criteria is formulated.

For the Central City Stage typology the main criteria are attractive social amenities, high multi-functionality and high differentiation. For the Passer-by Runway type it is high surveyability and high sitting capacity. And at last, for Performance Enclave attractive social amenities, high multi-functionality, and attractive art amenities are most important.
CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION
9 CONCLUSION

9.1 Sub Conclusions

Through three sub questions, focussing on different elements within the total research, results to answer this main question were conducted. In this conclusion, first a short version of the sub conclusions will be described before presenting the main conclusion.

The first sub question focuses on the similarities and differences of social and aesthetic performance: (1) What is the relation between social and aesthetic performance? Social and aesthetic performance have a lot in common, which aspects exactly is described more extensively in the conclusion of chapter 3. However, the two types also differ on three critical aspects, namely intention, attendance and duration. The clarity of this thesis required a division between what is social and what is aesthetic performance, since the two types have been taken as a starting point of the research (Schechner, 1976). In the sub conclusion a final note is made that there is understanding that both types can in practice also be strongly interwoven.

The second sub question targets at finding a solution for the problems raised in the problem statement: (2) How to strategically enhance both social and aesthetic performance in cities? The second sub research concludes that a mutual enhancement of the two performance types is the key to success: both performance types profit from a stronger relation with the other type. The similarities researched in the first sub question form the basis for an understanding that a strategic enhancement might be a collaboration, a combination of the two performance types in space and time. This strategic collaboration is called ‘Public Theatricality’ throughout the thesis. It is concluded that the public spaces of the city form the ideal ‘stage set’ for this public theatricality, requiring however a thorough selection and urban design improvement to fully facilitate both kinds of performance. The research ends with the understanding that a strategic enhancement consists of five consequential steps.

The third and final sub question zooms in at the urban design level of this strategic enhancement described in the second sub question: (3) What are the criteria of urban design that enhance both? In the first step, physical aspects are distilled from urban design and performance literature (Pavis, 2003; Project for Public Spaces, 2005) resulting in nineteen aspects, forming forty conditions. With the help of the case study design in Liverpool, a further selection of the main criteria, in relation to square typology finally leads to the formulation of the main urban design criteria.

9.2 Main Conclusion

The main question that determined the main direction of this thesis, is formulated as follows:

*How to enhance social and aesthetic performance in Northwest European cities through urban design?*

Research described step-by-step in the previous chapters resulted in the creation of a public theatricality strategy. Further literature research then led to the selection of nineteen physical aspects of Public Theatricality. The physical aspects formed the basis of the formulation of 40 conditions, related to design references. This then led to the categorisation of three different types of squares of Public Theatricality.
The three sub questions individually answered the various fragments the main question consists of:

- **Sub Q. 1**: How to enhance social and aesthetic performance in Northwest European cities through urban design?
- **Sub Q. 2**: Inventory
- **Sub Q. 3**: Anchor Points

The main component of the question, the ‘how’ is researched in the second sub question, resulting in a step-by-step strategy that can be applied to all Northwest European cities that aim for a further enhancement of social and aesthetic performance. This strategy is named ‘public theatricality’, with the five steps being:

- Inventory
- Anchor Points
- Urban Stage Transformation
- Participation Performing Arts Sector
- Wayfinding & Referral

After the first step, an inventory of the existing networks of social and aesthetic performance in the city that are targeted at, the second step is to define anchor points in the city. The anchor points are public spaces that function as places to start the implementation of public theatricality, having impact over the entire city centre. The research resulted in the understanding that there are actually three types of those anchor points. Being the ‘central city stage’, the ‘passer-by runway’ and ‘the performance enclave’. It’s role in the city’s strategic framework can be described as follows:

- **Central City Stage**: City’s main activity square. Exciting central point in the city, all year round for all living and visiting the city. The city square as a stage.
- **Passer-by Runway**: One of the main city connectors of pedestrian traffic, but where people meet, is performance. The city street as a runway of those passing by.
- **Performance Enclave**: One of those public, yet slightly tucked away places of the city. A place out of the hectic of the city, related to the art performance institutions. A place to meet socially and artistically. The city enclave as a performance breeding ground.

The third step requires an understanding of how through urban design, an adaptation of the public spaces can be made. The importance of this step is reflected in the final element of the main research question: ‘through urban design’. A further research on this small-scale level is done in the third sub research. The sub research takes the second sub research outcome of three types of places of public theatricality as a starting point. The three types all function differently in the strategic framework of public theatricality in the city. Per typology the main urban design criteria are explored. These are:

- **Central City Stage**: attractive social amenities, multi-functionality and differentiation.
- **Passer-by Runway**: survey-ability, and sitting capacity
- **Performance Enclave**: attractive social amenities, multi-functionality, and attractive art amenities.

The main urban design criteria might be the last step in the last sub research, but in the sequence of the step-by-step strategy, still two
more steps have to be taken. The fourth step, participation by the performing art sector is an essential step targeting at the local performing arts organisations within the city. A good understanding of the existing art network is crucial. Involving the organisations already in an early stage in the urban transformation process (what kind of art amenities are requested in order to make the public theatricality strategy a success?) and informing them about the positive effects for the art sector when attending the public spaces of the city (for the extended argumentation, see the first sub research, chapter 3).

For implementation of the fifth and last step again a task is reserved for the urban designer: optimisation the routing between the anchor points, and the art performance centres, the communities where regularly indoor, often paid performances are given. Optimisation is done through intuitive wayfinding, focussing at pedestrian traffic coming from the anchor points, the hot spots of public theatricality. For example in the case study, this is done through the placement of old British phone booths, painted in a distinctive colour, that at the same time functioned as small places for art exhibitions. Along the route, theatrical lighting on the pavement, lightens the pedestrians as if they are on the stage. For the rest, the route was widened, retiled and redesigned with as little barriers for pedestrian traffic as possible.

At the end, after execution of this these five step strategy, the physical transformation on city level might be small, yet the repositioning of the aesthetic performances, and the increase of the possibilities social performance is large. The first sub question indicated the value of great social performance in the city, related to insights by Gehl (1987), Jacobs (2009), Whyte (2001) and Müller (2002) (see chapter 3.3.5 for the value of social performance as written in literature). This thesis tried to research a design-oriented way of reaching this optimum of great life between buildings, by at the same targeting another urgent problem in our city, the weak implementation of the art performance sector within the social networks of the city. This research provides a single five-stepped-strategy that is able to turn the two separate problems into a singular solution. The theatrical city as an optimal concept for joyful city life.
EVALUATION
EVALUATION
10. REFLECTION

10.1 Reflection on research process
In this first project with such a long time span (the project started in September 2011) the research-by-design character kept the project interesting to do from beginning till the end. Because the focus point never stayed the same during more than a few weeks, the research continued to be challenging. It also meant that the final outcomes of both the design and the research where constantly subject to changes.

For me personally the project was very interesting, and while in the process I had a lot of curiosity what results the project would come up with. For a couple of years, it has been a personal curiosity to research the relation between two personal fields of interest: urban design and the performing arts. Personally, I have always experienced a strong connection between these two disciplines, but it was great to be able to research the historical academic context of this relation. Also it was interesting to finally do an academic project of such a large size and level that the final outcome wasn’t predictable in any way at the start.

In the beginning of the project the borders of the research scope aren’t clearly defined yet. At that phase, I found it difficult not to get ‘lost’ in the immense scale academic literature. An extra struggle was that I had chosen a subject that requested literature from urban studies, sociology and performance studies. Mainly in the literature of performance studies, it took me some time to get grip of the field of knowledge, and the vocabulary used in these books.

The formulation of the strategy was quite a straightforward process. Yet the formulation of the main urban design criteria proved to be much more of a struggle. It was a challenge that for this sub question little academic background info was easy at hand. From the beginning it was clear that I wanted to present these criteria as a to-the-point toolbox for public theatricality. However, this toolbox shouldn’t be too specific, killing all design ideas and spontaneity when applying these to a public space, but shouldn’t be too generic either, leaving potential designers with little clues and inspiration.

10.2 Reflection on research results
The research for answering the main research question resulted in the formulation of a Public Theatricality Strategy and several Main Urban Design Criteria. Although presented quite clearly divided in this graduation report, the research and design results in this Research-by-Design process were conducted via a continuous back-and-forth of the research and the design project. The research had its influence on the design and vice versa.

In the beginning I found it difficult to balance between personal research results and external results, derived from academic literature. But at the completion of this graduation report, I belief that this balance is found, by presenting self achieved research results, supported by academic literature. As was said, the process of reaching the main urban design criteria was more of a struggle than achieving the strategy. At the end I’m quite satisfied with the results, having presented a toolbox that didn’t only contain the main urban design criteria, but also exemplary designs and typologies, all in relation with the three types of public spaces.
10.3 Reflection on design results

In the beginning I doubted a lot what would be the city of choice, since my starting point, what later would be called public theatricality, didn’t lead towards a strict location. The choice of Liverpool was based personal interest, and on the fact that the city centre offered the ability to still make changes in the urban fabric. In many (monumental) city centres this is hardly possible. At the end, the two visits to Liverpool proved to be of great inspiration.

It is remarkable to see that the first sketches made of the three public spaces in Liverpool were conceptually quite comparable to the final designs. In all three cases the two site visits in November and April gave many inspiration on how to design these spaces. The three designs are of modest scale and budget, as an answer to the mega-constructions done in the city centre of Liverpool (such as Liverpool One), proving that also smaller scale designs can have a great influence on public life. To further zoom in, I decided to also make details of several elements of the design. It was great to work on such a small almost architectural level, experimenting with materials and small dimensions.

10.4 Recommendations for further research

As was written in the chapter Relevance (see chapter 1.2) little has been written about the relation performing arts & urban design. Therefore, recommendations for further research can be given in almost every direction.

A deeper research on the material conditions of social and aesthetic performance, not only based on literature research, but also, in the style of William H. Whyte by empirical research.

A comparison with a non-Northwest-European city would also be interesting to made. How is public theatricality different in other European cities in for instance Spain and Italy. Or in China, or the United States. The way we perform socially in the public spaces of the city is heavily culturally dependent. The countries in Southern-Europe for instance, have a much more vivid city life on the public spaces all year round because of climate differences.

10.5 Acknowledgements

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34. – 53. The nineteen aspects of public theatricality. Schemes made by author.


73. – 78 Drawings and maps by author.

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