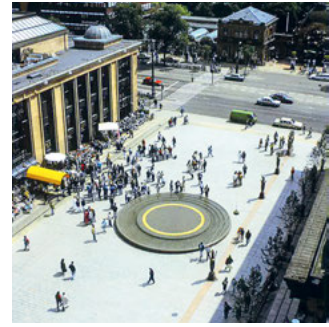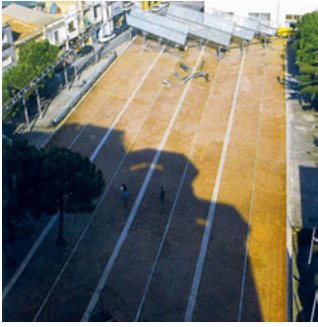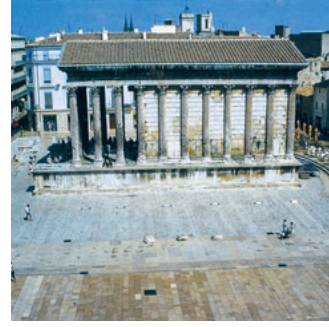# INTRO DUCTION

1.1 1980−2000. An urban language

PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN, A CRITICALLY UNDEREXAMINED ACTIVITY

Since the reappraisal of functionalism in urban design in the 1960s, public spaces have returned to the center of attention of urban professionals, as fundamental elements of action in the construction of cities. This evolution has created opportunities to rethink the design of public space, as demonstrated by the advent of new designer profiles, the development of unusual types of places, and the consideration of more recreational urban practices over recent decades.

More surprisingly, since the turn of the 21st century, there has been an intriguing diversification of formal and material particularities in the design of public spaces. These particularities depart from a certain tradition of public space design, and are especially surprising because of their original approach and their way of breaking away from the built context and surrounding public spaces, by conferring a particular autonomy to public spaces. Moreover, the designers seem to draw inspiration increasingly from new fields of reference, endowing each design with a singular character conveyed by strong images.

In only 20 years, the field of public space design has literally metamorphosed, without the resulting mutations of the urban landscape being really questioned. Indeed, unlike the Barcelona and Lyon laboratories of the eighties and nineties, which were the subject of considerable theoretical and critical emulation at the time, the profound changes in the design of public spaces that we have recently witnessed remain little debated. More specifically, the significant absence of critical studies of design processes is regrettable. This gap remains despite the fact that in recent years there has been significant interest in the subject, confirmed by the publication of abundant research, books, and specialized journals dealing with public spaces. This book is intended to complement the existing literature and has three main objectives.

RESTORING THE FOCUS ON MATERIALITY

This book is about *public space* in a very precise sense of the term, which should be explained at the outset. This neologism – which appeared in the French language at the end of the seventies and only came into common use in the nineties[1] – was transformed in less than 40 years into a complex notion, which today has a plurality of meanings. In the semantic vagueness that characterizes the concept of public space, the main ambiguity lies in the double understanding of the term *space*, which can be understood as both material, and intangible.[2]

The numerous social, geographical, philosophical, political, and economic studies that have contributed to the recognition of public space as an object of research since the seventies have focused on the uses, functions, and complex development processes of these new levers of urban transformation.[3] In effect, this growing interest has revolved around a critique of the modern movement, which was accused of being too concerned with forms and not enough with people. As a reaction, urban professionals initially focused mainly on the intangible aspects of public space. Consequently, the material component was obscured from critical debate.[4]

While rejection of "formal" concerns still seems firmly anchored in the current mentality, it is necessary to rediscover this tangible dimension of the public space. Neglecting it entails risks, as Jean-Pierre Cohen had affirmed in 1998: "a stated indifference to form is all too often a gesture of renunciation and delegation of decisions to technicians."[5] Practitioners now understand this issue well and fully embrace this field of design that has, in reality, been recognized since the eighties. It is now up to theorists and critics to evaluate these developments in practice, and their repercussions, in order to contribute to an informed debate on public space design.

Bearing these issues in mind, this book aims to reassess the issue of public space in its tangible reality. This does not mean supplanting the theoretical questions of use and function, but rather insisting on a field of investigation that has been neglected until now, that of *materiality*, and understood as follows: *Materiality refers to the tangible dimension of a public space, defined by its composition, shape, and size, but also by the materials and their texture, the equipment, the furniture, the plants that constitute it, the colors, and the light that characterize it.*[6]

In this context, the focus will be on developed public spaces, that is, spaces that have been the subject of design reflection with a view to their future appropriation by users.[7] Hence, in this work, *the term* public space *will be understood as an urban public space, which is an open space, freely accessible to all, designed to accommodate uses of necessity and of relaxation. It is embedded in an urban fabric with which it can interact and is, in principle, connected to a larger network of open spaces.*

This definition is an opportunity to specify that this work focuses on projects designed and delivered by urban professionals – architects, landscape architects, urban designers – and resulting from traditional commissions.[8] The design of public spaces is approached here from a European perspective,

occupying as it does an important place in large and medium-sized cities in Western Europe. Indeed, the ideological and project-related innovations of the early 21st century have been principally illustrated in these territories. Finally, it should be noted that the designs concentrate on public spaces in an urban environment, that is, those likely to be more reliant on a relationship with the surrounding built and natural fabric.

BACKTRACKING TO DESIGN

The starting point of this book is that the analysis of the design of a public space can only be complete if it questions the three fundamental phases of the project: *design, materialization*, and *subsequent use*. However, these three stages are usually treated in isolation.

Materialization

The *materialization* phase is the one that has undoubtedly focused the most attention over the past two decades. Leading the way in 2001, Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe published *New City Spaces*, presenting a selection of designs produced between 1975 and 2000.[9] A valuable source of documentation of late 20th-century production, this book is distinguished by in-depth project descriptions and a design analysis of each public space that allows for comparison.

Since the mid-2000s, descriptive publications presenting public space projects from around the world have become widespread to meet the expectations of a readership eager for references.[10] However, a lack of critical analysis seems to be the common feature of many of these publications, which all too often present a highly controlled version of the projects, characterized by glowing descriptions, recurring texts presumably provided by the project authors, embellished promotional drawings, or the widespread publication of retouched photographs of newly inaugurated spaces.

Around the same time, public spaces began to appear on the covers of numerous architectural, urban design, and landscape magazines. And similarly, as for the abovementioned publications, both the texts and the iconography seemed to come from the design studios, which disseminated a very stylized image of their production. Thus, similar portraits of projects are repeated indiscriminately from one magazine to another.[11]

From the turn of the century onward, a series of awards also brought public space design to the forefront. The publication of the *European Prize for Urban Public Space*, awarded by the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB)[12] and the triennial albums[13] produced by the Landscape Architecture Europe (LAE) foundation, are examples of this. Their critical nature, based on selection by jury and an in-depth analysis of each example, makes them real exceptions in the sphere of specialized publications. Nevertheless, the notion of public space is accepted in a broad sense, making it difficult to compare the diversity of projects presented.

It is clear that the theme of public spaces is experiencing a real boom in descriptive publications intended mainly for practitioners. However, in most cases, this type of contribution examines public space designs only in their finished state, that of *materialization*.

Use

The *use* of public spaces is a second strand that has received particular attention during exploration of the subject. One thinks of the research field recently named *Public Life Studies*,[14] which emerged in the sixties. Among the precursors of this movement, Kevin Lynch and Gordon Cullen published, at the beginning of the 1960s, two fundamental texts of urban theory, placing the user at the center of their concerns by focusing their discourse on the visual perception of urban landscapes.[15] In 1961, their contemporary, Jane Jacobs, wrote *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*,[16] a work that marked an essential stage in the recent history of urban planning. In the wake of these three works, a series of researchers and practitioners, mainly based in the United States, explored the issues raised by these authors by examining human behavior in urban space. Among the most significant contributions are the following publications: *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*,[17] by William H. Whyte, and *How to Turn a Place Around*,[18] by his successors in the Project for Public Space group (2000), *Life Between Buildings*,[19] and *Cities for People*,[20] by Jan Gehl, and *People Places*, by Clare Cooper Marcus and Carolyn Francis.[21]

Each of these authors approaches the question of public space from a different angle, drawing lessons from their observations of the uses of formal designs and from a measure of public space in its relationship to the body.[22] By encouraging the observation of everyday life, *Public Life Studies* contributes to better identifying our needs and the diversity of human behaviors in the public space. However, having as a starting point that of the user, these studies embrace public spaces in a holistic way, not distinguishing between what is existing and difficult to alter (building, cultural context, activities, designation …), and what is related to the design. Also, the research mentioned focuses on a finished object, the urban reality, and not on the design choices that led to its realization. These two observations allow us to introduce a crucial distinction between the
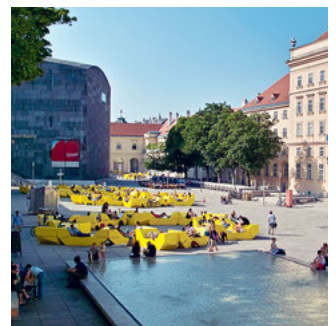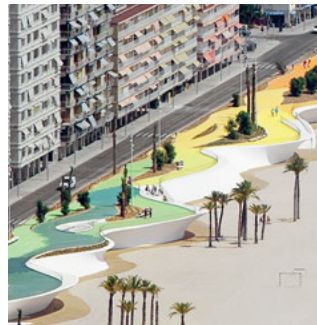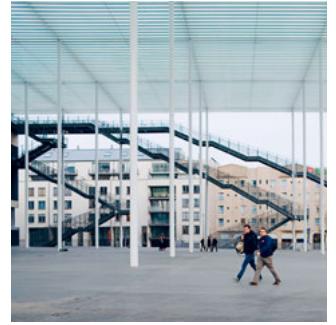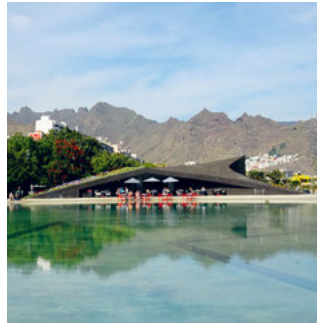
1.2 Beginning of the 21st century. New forms, materials, and fields of reference

"analysis of public spaces" that constitutes the subject of *Public Life Studies* and the "analysis of public space design" that we are dealing with here.

Design

Finally, the *design* phase, that is, the project's intellectual development, has clearly received the least attention to date. The challenge of examining this initial stage, a "product of the human mind,"[23] seems fundamental to understanding the foundations that led to the most original achievements in development of public space at the beginning of the 21st century.

A few researchers and critics have begun to open the way to the study of public space design, introducing systematic methods of analysis as well as different keys to reading completed developments. In 2005–2006, for example, the Spanish journal *a+t* devoted four issues to the question of *collective spaces*, which led to the publication of the book *The Public Chance: New Urban Landscapes*[24] in 2008. The systematic analyses of public spaces presented in the book are based on elements of development and organization of uses (*water, vegetation, buildings, roads, rooms, activities*), allowing a form of comparison between projects. In 2011, the same editorial team launched a series of three issues on the theme of "strategy," integrating urban design, landscape, and public space projects.[25] The object of study is broad and not of immediate concern to us. On the other hand, the interest here lies in the way in which the authors seek to distance themselves from the final result in order to focus on the concepts and the project processes, that is, the design phase.

Let us also mention, for its exceptional character, the analysis of more than fifty proposals produced for the competition of the Parc de la Villette in Paris, launched in 1982, that Lodewijk Baljon published in 1992. To our knowledge, this researcher is the first and only one to have systematically and comparatively questioned design intentions for public spaces.[26] While this focus seems interesting, the method used nevertheless has the disadvantage of being based solely on the analysis of competition submissions, and therefore involves an important interpretive dimension. An in-depth study of the design would need to address all phases of the project realization, examining the intentions and decisions that guided each evolution. It would also need to extend beyond the moment of submission of the competition documents.

Therefore, while design does seem to be starting to interest journalists, critics, and researchers, it remains a subject that is still insufficiently considered. In particular, one regrets the absence of all the iconography produced during the design process, the vast majority of projects presenting publication drawings reworked for the occasion. Analyses based on archived design documents remain isolated cases. A look at the intentions, decisions, and operating procedures that guide the project's development processes is imperative to complement the knowledge acquired to date. This is why the second ambition of this book is to place the emphasis firmly on design. In addition to this change of focus, it is necessary to take a critical look at the recent creation of public spaces.

TAKING A CRITICAL LOOK

From the mid-nineties onward, a number of professionals began to state their views of the many innovations in this field that were arousing increasing interest. A number of French voices spoke out against a tendency to consider each public space design as a general solution to urban problems. They questioned the inability to create quality urban environments in the first place, and the overemphasis on public spaces as a way of dealing with this shortcoming.[27] The emphasis given to these public spaces arose in other European level discussions that questioned the proliferation of spectacular developments. The terms "gesturing" or "overkill" were used to denounce public space projects that strove to be yet more unusual and original.[28] In the same vein, others protested against an aestheticization and staging of public spaces that often leads to detachment from their context.[29]

Faced with the question of a decrease in the local anchorage of designs of that time, some researchers and journalists went as far as to denounce a "formal homogenization" of public spaces from the end of the nineties.[30] This concern seems surprising, given the great diversity and innovation in the types of spaces, and the uses, design strategies, and idioms that the last decade seems to have experienced. Nevertheless, French theorist Jacques Lucan formulated an answer to explain this widespread denunciation. He argued that homogenization is more global than local, noting that "public spaces, which tend not to resemble each other in the same city, appear paradoxically to resemble each other from one city to another."[31] However, he did not go into this hypothesis in depth.

Despite the relevance of the questions they raised, these few emerging critical voices cannot be construed as true theories of public space design. Indeed, the arguments put forward by the various researchers, critics, and journalists often remained at the level of summaries and general statements. In the absence of more elaborate demonstrations supported by project analyses, the statements made could not be verified. Conversely, some of the more in-depth critiques focused on examples or contexts so specific that they could not be

generalized to the entire production of the turn of the 21st century. Nevertheless, all of these isolated and specific reflections together form the premises of a general critical discourse on the state of public space design over the period. As such, they have largely inspired this work.

These endeavors must be continued and extended, as the appreciation of recent developments in public space design seems essential to the evolution and reform of a rapidly expanding field. Criticism is aimed at two groups in particular: on the one hand, the creators whose work needs to be guided, and on the other, public opinion, which needs to be provided with tools to enable it to make a value judgment on current practice.[32] The former need an external appreciation of their production in order to surpass themselves and respond as closely as possible to the expectations of the greatest number. The latter, on the other hand, expect to be provided with the keys to understanding and the criteria for assessment, which will help to fuel the debate. In this sense, criticism must remain an instructive and operational tool, rather than a mere appreciation.[33]

Criticism also plays a role of interconnection between practice and theory, as the Catalan architect Josep Maria Montaner explained in 1993: "Criticism exists only if theory exists. Any critical activity must be based on a theory from which we can deduce the judgments that support interpretations. In the same way, any theory requires the experience of being tested and exercised on criticism."[34] This has a crucial consequence for the rest of this book; a critique of the production of public space design at the turn of the 21st century cannot be conducted without first formulating a general theory of it. This exploratory theory will then have to be "put to the test" by a series of critical analyses of actual projects, enabling it to be proven.
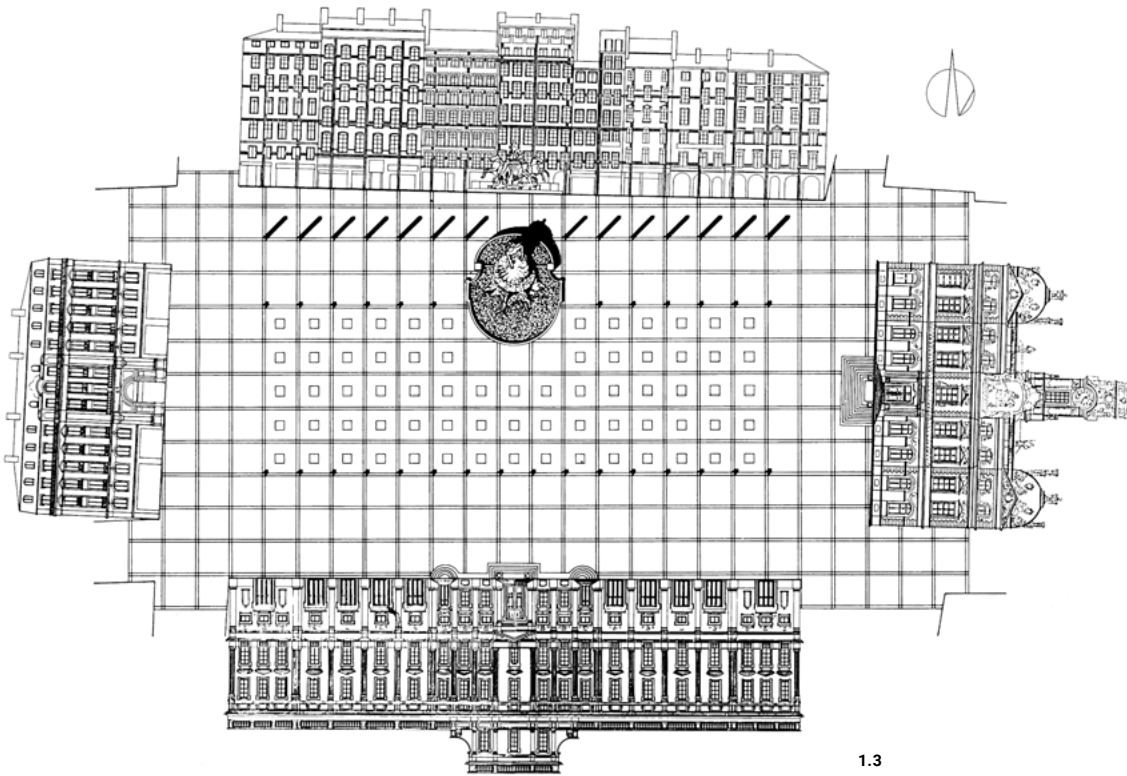
1.3

1.3 Public space composition resulting from the design of the major building fronts. *Place des Terreaux, Lyon, Daniel Buren – Christian Drevet, 1991–1994*
1.4 Representing public space as a figure. *Købmagergade, Copenhagen, KBP. EU (Karres en Brands – Werk Arkitekter – Sangberg Architects), 2008–2013*
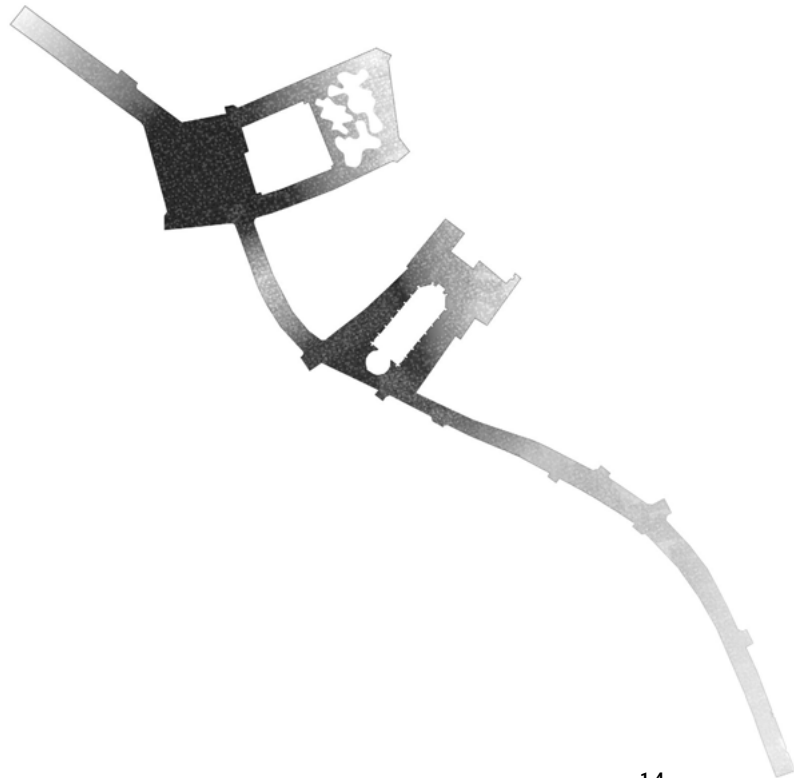
1.4

THE PUBLIC SPACE, OBJECT PER SE?

This book aims to reach an understanding of what could be described as a profound reform – even a "paradigm" shift – in the design of public spaces, one that has been taking place since the turn of the 21st century. Until then, a typically urban idiom seemed to prevail in their design. This idiom can be defined by the use of mineral surfacing, furniture, and equipment made of wood, stone, or metal, and urban plant species (plane trees, chestnut trees, lime trees, elms, hornbeams, maples, etc.), by a spectrum of colors reduced to mineral tones (gray and beige), and finally, in terms of composition, by a mixture of sobriety and rationality typical of urban fabrics and buildings (simple forms, horizontality, orthogonality, regularity, recurrence, etc.).

Until the end of the 1990s, these design principles, described here in a somewhat caricatural way, dominated the production of public spaces, even the most innovative ones (Fig. 1.1, p. 30). However, the next two decades saw experimentation with new forms of design, exploring all manner of daring avenues: assertive three-dimensionality, sculpted or organic forms, random composition, atypical bright colors, elaborate and figurative ornamental motifs, domestic and collective furniture, wild or artificial landscaping and so on (Fig. 1.2, p. 33). These new expressions tend toward a formal, material, and semantic autonomy, according to the advanced theoretical concept of a public space as an object *per se.*

FORMAL AND MATERIAL AUTONOMY

The first element that leads us to state such a hypothesis lies in the way in which designers tend to singularize each space by conceiving it as a distinct and independent entity. This new value, *per se,* attributed to them, is presented as a rupture, given that urban spaces had traditionally been perceived in connection with the buildings and public areas that surrounded them. Often they were even conceived as backdrops to enhance the surrounding architecture, thereby assimilating as many contextual elements as possible (Fig. 1.3).

However, the role of public spaces as a lever for urban development, from the sixties onward, reversed this established hierarchical relationship. Public spaces were gradually considered as entities in their own right. From the end of the nineties, this reversal was also illustrated in the way in which they were designed: a distinctive ground covering was applied – often including a materialized border, sometimes with a change in ground level – allowing the spaces to be clearly delimited; their composition was no longer necessarily based on elements of the existing urban fabric; the materials used contrasted with the surrounding context; in some cases, the public space even took on a three-dimensional value that competed with the adjacent buildings. All these elements contribute to the questioning of a dichotomous relationship solid/void or built/non-built and lead us to wonder: are public spaces becoming unique figures of our urban landscapes?[35] (Fig. 1.4).

This initial reflection echoes the notions of figure and background borrowed from Gestalt theories by many architects and urban designers and planners from the 1970s onward to illustrate certain changes in urban thinking.[36] One of the current dominant ideas lies in the fact that our perceptive field would be made of solids, "figures," and of voids between these objects, the "background," and that there would be a certain subjective preconception in our perception of the latter.[37] In other words, we perceive or represent as a figure that which we value. Assimilating public spaces to figures would therefore consist in attributing to them a pre-eminent role in relation to the surrounding urban fabric.

However, the notion of figure does not seem sufficient to understand the singularization to which public spaces are subject at the turn of the 21st century. Beyond the intention of formal and material rupture that certain designs unquestionably assume, one observes a quest for contrast that is illustrated on a more symbolic level. This aspect, detailed below, encourages us to prefer the expression "object per se" to that of "figure," nonetheless commonly accepted in urban discourse for several decades.

SEMANTIC AUTONOMY

By their organization and complex forms, their original materials, their atypical plant species, and finally their bright and original colors, the arrangements of public spaces of the turn of the 21st century produce very specific atmospheres contrasting with the urban environment in which they are located. The autonomy they display goes beyond a simple question of Gestalt. These developments reflect a desire to break with the past, in the sense that each space has its own character.[38]

The notion of character used here emerged in the classical age in the field of architecture to describe the adequacy between the form and the function of a building. Little by little, the term integrates the idea of impressions or sensations that a building would be likely to provoke through forms, materials, colors, or textures. "Let's look at an object! The first feeling that we get then comes obviously from the way the object affects us. And I call character the effect which results from this

object and causes some impression in us," wrote the architect Etienne-Louis Boullée in his *Essai sur l'art,* clearly expressing this emotional dimension associated with a built work.[39]

Public spaces that assume a character of their own would therefore seek to evoke emotions other than those usually aroused by urban contexts. A more scenographic dimension of their design seems to be emerging, one that puts the user and their impressions at the heart of the matter.

But in architectural theory, the notion of character also includes a distinctive and significant dimension.[40] Distinctive in the sense that a building – or a public space – is given its own character in order to be noticed, which gives it a certain autonomy, even pre-eminence, in relation to its context. The significant dimension is expressed in the character of the conceived object, which would not only provoke emotions but would also convey a particular symbolism.

Echoing the discourse on urban semiology of the sixties,[41] this interpretation of the notion of character confirms the relevance of considering the design of public spaces from the perspective of their meanings. By resonating with collective mental images, public spaces, which tend to become more and more figurative, are bearers of discourse and testify to the societal concerns of their time. One observes indeed a propensity among the designers to refer to new universes, often leading them to thematize the public spaces that they shape. Fields of reference such as nature, ports, railways, industrial sites, art, domesticity, villages, playful and child universes, affirm themselves as influences of urban fabric at the beginning of the 21st century. By evoking new and sometimes distant references, the designs tend to detach public spaces from their surrounding urban contexts and thus convey meanings of their own.

The expression "object per se," in the sense of a distinct entity that possesses its own integrity and its own references, seems appropriate to describe the double phenomenon of autonomy – formal/material and semantic – to which certain public spaces of the beginning of the 21st century are subject. The rest of the book aims to verify this hypothesis of autonomy of public spaces through the analysis of ten case studies. But before moving on to this theoretical demonstration, let us return to the general context that surrounded the production of these projects.

1 Paquot, Thierry, "Editorial. Espace(s) public(s)," *Urbanisme*, n° 346, January–February 2006, p. 42. The term *public space* in English will experience a similar growing recognition from the 1960s.

2 Lussault, Michel, and Jacques Lévy, "Espace public I," and Michel Lussault, "Espace public II," in Jacques Lévy and Michel Lussault (eds), *Dictionnaire de la géographie et de l'espace des sociétés*, Paris, Belin, 2003, pp. 333–339 and pp. 339–340.

3 For the French-speaking context, one can cite the following examples: Plan Urbain, *Espaces publics*, Paris, Ministère de l'Equipement et du Logement-DAU-DRI, 1988; Michel Bassand et al., *Vivre et créer l'espace public*, Lausanne, Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, 2001; Jean-Yves Toussaint and Monique Zimmermann, *User, observer, programmer et fabriquer l'espace public*, Lausanne, Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, 2001; "L'espace public," *Géocarrefour*, vol. 76, n° 1, 2001; Thierry Paquot, *L'espace public*, Paris, La Découverte, coll. Repères, 2009.

4 Blanc, Jean-Noël, "Voir l'espace dans l'espace public," *Géocarrefour,* vol. 76, n° 1, 2001, pp. 59–67.

5 Cohen, Jean-Louis, "Learning from Barcelona: Twenty Years of Urban Projects and their Reception," in Pep Subirós (ed.), *Ciutat real, ciutat ideal (Real City, Ideal City)*, Barcelona, Centre de Cultura Contemporània, 1998. Available online: https://www.publicspace.org/multimedia/-/post/learning-from-barcelona-twenty-years-of-urban-projects-and-their-reception [accessed February 23, 2022].

6 The definitions of the basic terms used in this book are listed in a glossary, ref. p. 268.

7 Whether for necessary functional uses (moving, waiting, etc.) or for optional recreational uses (walking, playing, socializing, etc.) as defined by Jan Gehl. This fundamental distinction lies above all in the fact that the second category of uses requires the addition of good quality facilities. Jan Gehl, *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*, New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987, reprinted by Island Press, 2011, pp. 9–14. [Orig. ed. *Livet mellem husene – udeaktiviteter og udemiljøer*, Arkitektens Forlag, 1971]. Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre, *How To Study Public Life,* Washington D.C., Island Press, 2013, p. 16.

8 Spontaneous appropriation by citizens, subversive urban artistic actions, and institutionalized ephemeral operations are very current topics in the development of public spaces, in which we recognize

the interest and relevance. However, to ensure clarity of the field of investigation, this type of approach has been deliberately left out of this book.

9 Gehl, Jan, and Lars Gemzøe, *New City Spaces, Strategies and Projects*, Copenhagen, The Danish Architectural Press, 2001.

10 To name but a few: Sarah Gaventa, *New Public Spaces*, London, Mitchell Beazley, 2006; Aldo Aymonino, Valerio Paolo Mosco, *Contemporary Public Space – Un-volumetric Architecture,* Milan, Skira, 2006; Jacobo Krauel, *New Urban Spaces*, Barcelona, Links International, 2006; Dimitris Kottas, *Urban Spaces: Squares and Plazas,* Barcelona, Links International, 2007; Arthur Gao, *Public Square Landscapes*, Hong Kong, Design Media Publishing Ltd, 2011; Robert Klanten et al. (eds), *Going Public: Public Architecture, Urbanism and Interventions. The Creative Revival of Public Space*, Berlin, Gestalten Verlag, 2012; Chris van Uffelen, *Urban Spaces: Plazas, Squares & Streetscapes,* Salenstein, Braun, 2012; Jacobo Krauel, *Urban Spaces. Design and Innovation,* Barcelona, Links International, 2013.

11 By way of exception, German and French journals such as *Deutsche Bauzeitung, Topos, Archithese (CH), Criticat,* and *D'architectures,* periodically publish critical analyses personally documented by the journalists.

12 Anglès, Magda (ed.), *In Favour of Public Space. Ten Years of the European Prize for Urban Public Space,* Barcelona, Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Actar, 2010.

13 Diedrich, Lisa, et al. (eds), *Fieldwork*, Basel/Boston/Berlin, Birkhäuser Verlag, Series, Landscape Architecture Europe, 2006; Lisa Diedrich et al. (eds), *On Site*, Basel/Boston/Berlin, Birkhäuser Verlag, Series, Landscape Architecture Europe, 2009; Lisa Diedrich et al. (eds), *In Touch*, Basel/Boston/Berlin, Birkhäuser Verlag, Series, Landscape Architecture Europe, 2012; Lisa Diedrich et al. (eds), *On the Move*, Wageningen, Blauwdruk, Series, Landscape Architecture Europe, 2015.

14 Gehl and Svarre, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 41 .

15 Lynch, Kevin, *L'image de la cité*, Paris, Dunod, 1971. [Orig. ed. *The Image of the City*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1960]; Gordon Cullen, *Townscape*, London, The Architectural Press, 1961.

16 Jacobs, Jane, *Déclin et survie des grandes villes américaines*, Marseille, Parenthèses, 2012. [Orig. ed. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* New York, Random House, 1961].

17 Whyte, William H., *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, Washington D.C., The Conservation Foundation, 1980.

18 Madden, Kathy, and Andy Wiley-Schwartz, *How to Turn a Place Around: A Handbook for Creating Successful Public Spaces*, New York, Project for Public Spaces Inc., 2000.

19 Gehl, *op. cit.*, 2011 [1971].

20 Gehl, Jan, *Cities for People,* Washington D.C., Island Press, 2010.

21 Marcus, Clare Cooper, and Carolyn Francis (eds), *People Places*, New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990.

22 Some venture to propose spatial recommendations for design, observation tools, and evaluation criteria for public spaces. Gehl Institute, "Twelve Quality Criteria," n.d., available at https://gehlinstitute.org/tool/quality-criteria/ [accessed January 11, 2017]. Projects for Public Spaces Inc., *How to Turn a Place Around: A Handbook for Creating Successful Public Spaces,* New York, Project for Public Spaces Inc., 2000, p. 17.

23 Etienne-Louis Boullée clearly distinguishes between design and execution: "You have to design to build. Our forefathers did not build their huts until they had conceived the image of them. It is this thought process, this creation that constitutes architecture, which we can, consequently, define as the art of producing and bringing to perfection any building. The art of building is therefore only a secondary art, which we think it appropriate to call the scientific part of architecture." Etienne-Louis Boullée, *Architecture. Essai sur l'art,* 1799, Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos (ed.), Paris, Hermann, 1968, f. 70, p. 49.

24 "In Common, Collective Spaces," *a+t*, n° 25–27, 2005–2006; Aurora Fernández Per, Javier Arpa, *The Public Chance: New Urban Landscapes*, Vitoria-Gasteiz, *a+t* architecture publishers, In Common Series, 2008.

25 "Strategy Public, Landscape Urbanism Strategies," *a+t*, n° 35–36, 2011; "Strategy Space, Landscape Urbanism Strategies," *a+t*, n° 37, 2011; "Strategy and Tactics in Public Space," *a+t*, n° 38, 2011.

26 Baljon, Lodewijk, *Designing Parks*, Amsterdam, Architectura & Natura Press, 1992.

27 During a colloquium on public spaces, organized jointly by the Pavillon de l'Arsenal and the Ecole de Paris Tolbiac in December 1994, Bernard Huet asked the following rhetorical question: "I find it rather suspect that we will turn to public spaces as a panacea, as a means of solving a certain number of problems that cannot be solved where they arise. Intervening in public spaces thus becomes a reflection of our inability to produce public space?" His colleague Bruno Fortier supported his words: "Not knowing how to create urban space, we overvalue public spaces while waiting for the magic and wonders of their workings." Remarks reported in Martine Allaman, "Espaces publics: liberté, identité, continuité," *Diagonal,* n° 112, April 1995, p. 12.

28 *Ibid*, p. 13; Plan Urbain, *Espaces publics, op. cit.,* 1988, p. 80; Manuel de Solà-Morales, "The Impossible Project of Public Space," in Magda Anglès (ed.), *In Favour of Public Space. Ten Years of the European Prize for Urban Public Space*, Barcelona, Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Actar, 2010, p. 27.

29 Hajer, Maarten, and Arnold Reijndorp, *In Search of New Public Domain*, Rotterdam, NAi Publishers, 2002, in particular pp. 100–101; Steen Høyer, "Scenografisk landskab/Scenographic Landscape," *Architektur DK*, n° 1, 2002, pp. 4–11.

30 Genestier, Philippe, "Ville culturelle et espace touristique: sur quelques logiques et réification à l'œuvre dans l'économie post-industrielle," in Luc Doumenc et al., *L'espace public dans la ville méditer-ranéenne. Actes du colloque de Montpellier, 14–15–16 mars 1996,* Montpellier, Editions de l'Esperou, 1997, p. 43; Sven-Ingvar Andersson, "Globale oder regionale Landschaftsarchitektur/Global or Regional Landscape Architecture," *Topos,* n° 50, March 2005, p. 28; Sarah Gaventa, *New Public Spaces*, London, Mitchell Beazley, 2006, pp. 14–15.

31 Lucan, Jacques, *Où va la ville aujourd'hui? Formes urbaines et mixités*, Paris, Editions de la Villette, 2012, p. 182.

32 These two groups of recipients are notably evoked by Pierre Vago, "La critique architecturale – entre carcan et utilité," in Agnès Deboulet, Rainer Hoddé, André Sauvage, *La critique architecturale. Questions-frontières-desseins*, Paris, Editions de la Villette, 2008, p. 30. [Orig. ed. *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui,* n° 117, 1964–1965].

33 On this subject, see the words of Rem Koolhaas reported in "Rem, Do You Know What This Is?," *Hunch, the Berlage Institute Report*, n° 3, 2001, p. 33, or again Bernard Huet, "Les enjeux de la critique," in Deboulet et al., *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 78. [Orig. ed., *Le visiteur*, n° 1, fall 1995].

34 Montaner, Josep Maria, "Matière et technique de la critique," in Deboulet et al., *op. cit.*, 2008, pp. 123–124. [Orig. ed. *Arquitectura y crítica,* Barcelona, Editorial Gustavo Gili, 1999].

35 As far as we know, Stephanie Bender is the first to raise the question of public space as a figure, in relation to the Schouwburgplein on West 8 in Rotterdam (1990–1997). Stephanie Bender, *Le vide: nouvelles stratégies urbaines*, doctoral thesis n° 4841, Lausanne, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, 2011, p. 216.

36 This borrowing was probably initiated by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, who appeal to antinomic notions in 1978, in their book *Collage City*, making, according to the passages of the text, mention of the terms *solid* and *void*, or of *object* and *texture*. Colin Rowe, Fred Koetter, *Collage City*, Gollion, InFolio, 2002. [Orig. ed. *Collage City*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1978].

37 Guillaume, Paul, *La psychologie de la forme*, Paris, Flammarion, 1937, p. 59; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Paris, Gallimard, 1945, p. 39.

38 The terms atmosphere and character are often used interchangeably. Here we prefer to use the term character, which is based on conscious and intentional principles, whereas the creation of an atmosphere is more intuitive. Character also has a symbolic value, and in fact is significant. This distinction is notably based on the reflections of Gernot Böhme and Jean-Paul Thibaud, *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres*, London/New York, Routledge, 2017, pp. 1, 144–145. See also the glossary, p. 268.

39 Boullée, Etienne-Louis, *Architecture. Essai sur l'art*, 1799, Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos (ed.), Paris, Hermann, 1968, f. 84, p. 73.

40 On the subject of character, "The use of ordinary language, and particularly that of all theories, teaches us that the word and the idea of character are only applied to a certain type or to a certain number of distinctive signs, that is to say, to those which have the eminent property of designating and making an object stand out among many of its counterparts. [...] Having to limit ourselves here to these arts, and even more particularly to one of them (architecture), we will say that the use of the word character, such as the use of the theory authorizes it, indicates the work of art, not, in a vague and general sense, any distinction whatever the measure or the quality, but rather a predominant distinction that makes it stand out in the first place." Antoine Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, "Caractère," in *Dictionnaire historique d'architecture: comprenant dans son plan les notions historiques, descriptives, archéologiques ... de cet art*, Paris, A. Le Clère et Cie, 1832, vol. 1, pp. 302–308. Available online: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1045594m/f316.item.zoom [accessed October 18, 2017].

41 Lynch, *op. cit.*, 1971 [1960], having inspired Roland Barthes, "Sémiologie et urbanisme," *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, n° 153, 1970–71, pp. 11–13; Françoise Choay, "Sémiologie et urbanisme," in Françoise Choay et al., *Le sens de la ville*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1972, pp. 8–10. [Text developed from an article published in *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, n° 132, 1967].