



DA Dipartimento
Architettura
Ferrara

BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HOUSING,
PLANNING, AND RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE
TERRITORY

TOWARDS EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PERSPECTIVES

OCTOBER 16th-17th, 2025

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2nd International Conference on Housing, Planning, and Resilient Development of the Territory

Towards Euro-Mediterranean Perspectives

Conference Theme and Rationale

This conference returned for the second time within the Albanian and Mediterranean academic context, aiming to build a tradition of collaboration centered on scientific research and academia. Following the success of the first edition held on October 13th-14th, 2023, where proceedings were published in the Book of Proceedings, Albanica journal, and various international academic platforms, POLIS University and the Academy of Sciences of Albania relaunched this important event. The 2025 edition focused on housing, urban planning, and resilient territorial development, offering a platform for researchers, policymakers, and experts from the region and beyond.

Albania and the Western Balkans have faced major transformations in urbanization, spatial planning, and environmental management. Demographic changes, economic pressures, and environmental challenges created a need for new strategies in architecture, planning, and governance. This conference brought together diverse voices to explore these themes and promote resilient and sustainable development.

Key topics included architecture and the city, with emphasis on urban form, housing typologies, and the role of cultural heritage in modern urban design; urban mobility, addressing traffic challenges, public transport, and the use of technologies like GIS and AI in planning; and new housing models, focusing on affordability, energy efficiency, and innovative materials.

Discussions also covered demography and economy, exploring territorial governance, smart cities, social enterprises, and digital technologies such as AI, VR, and the Metaverse in urban management. Finally, the urban and natural environment was addressed through topics like pollution, adaptive planning, and nature-based solutions for climate resilience.

Through this conference, POLIS University and the Academy of Sciences of Albania aimed to foster a broad interdisciplinary debate on these pressing issues, combining academic and practical perspectives to offer concrete recommendations for future urban and territorial development policies and projects.

Organizers' Announcement

The International Scientific Conference on Housing, Urban Planning, and Resilient Territorial Development: Toward Euro-Mediterranean Approaches was held on October 16th-17th, 2025, in Tirana, Albania. Organized by POLIS University in collaboration with the Academy of Sciences of Albania and supported by national and international partners, including the University of Ferrara and Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development, the event brought together researchers, academics, policymakers, and professionals to address key challenges in urban development, with a focus on resilience and sustainability in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The first day of the conference took place at the Academy of Sciences, while the second day was hosted at POLIS University.

The conference explored five main themes:

- I. Architecture and the City, which investigated the typological and morphological dimensions of urban form, the evolution of collective and individual housing types, the relationship between architectural design and urban identity, and the role of historical and cultural heritage in shaping contemporary cities;
- II. Urban Mobility and Resilient Cities, which addressed traffic congestion, infrastructure challenges, and public transportation, while also promoting the redesign of public spaces – such as streets, squares, and pedestrian zones – to improve accessibility and mobility; it also explored the integration of digital technologies like GIS, AI, and simulation tools to enhance planning, automation, and infrastructure management;
- III. New Housing Models, which examined innovative approaches to affordable and social housing in response to demographic shifts and technological change, along with energy efficiency strategies, passive energy systems, and the application of new sustainable materials and construction technologies;
- IV. Demography and Economy, which focused on macro-regional and national dynamics impacting territorial development, including urban governance, disaster risk reduction, and the rise of smart and inclusive cities; it also explored how emerging technologies – such as AI, VR, and the Metaverse – along with social enterprises and circular economy practices, could foster more equitable and adaptive urban systems; and
- V. Urban and Natural Environment, which analyzed environmental degradation in urban settings, including air, water, and soil pollution, and promoted nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based planning, and adaptive strategies to enhance environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

The conference was conducted in English and Albanian (with self-translated texts where applicable) and was free of charge, with all registration fees fully covered by POLIS University in support of open academic exchange. Key deadlines included abstract submission by June 15th, acceptance notification by June 30th, first draft of papers by September 15th, and final submissions by October 31st.

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Table of Content

I. Architecture and the City: Architectural, Typological and Morphological Aspects of Settlement Form

Morphogenetic Axes as Generators and Anchors of Urban Form Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sotir DHAMO	5
The Structure of Tirana from 1614 to 1943. Continuities, Discontinuities and Relation with Western Cities Dr. Genti AVDIJA	16
Between Ideology and Identity. A Comparative Study of Socialist Hotel Architecture in Albania and the Balkans Dr. Malvina ISTREFAJ (KOLIÇI)	28
Vertical Growth and Urban Morphology. High-Rise Towers Reshaping Tirana's City Form MSc. Eneida MUHAMUÇI	40
Game of Towers. Vertical Growth - Horizontal Tensions MSc. Erjon ÇOBANI	50
Public Space and Urban Identity. Tracing the Shifts of Epidamn Boulevard, Durrës MSc. Arjola SAVA	60
Durrës After Transition: Urban Identity at the Edge of Time, Tourism, and Transformation MSc. Vjola ZIU	71

II. Traffic Crises in Cities and New Models of Sustainable and Resilient Cities

Tactical Urbanism as a Catalyst. Shaping people-centred mobility in Malta through experimentation Dr. Antoine ZAMMIT	80
How does the form of road infrastructure impact the propagation of traffic-induced noise in urban areas of Tirana? MSc. Kelvi PETI, Dr. Fiona IMAMI	95
Peripheral Journeys: Youth Mobility, Urban Margins and Social Inequality in Naples. The Everyday Experiences of Student Commuting and Spatial Injustice in a Euro-Mediterranean City Stud. Domenico Salvatore GALLUCCIO, Stud. Luca AMATO, LLM Candidate Francesco DE NIGRIS, Stud. Emanuele Mauro ABRIOLA	107

III. New Housing Models and Innovative Architectural-Urban Forms to Adapt to Demographic, Technological and Development Trends/Challenges

Cooperative Dwelling and Participative Governance. The Wogeno Case in Zürich Dr. Luca LEZZERINI	120
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Reimagining Urban Living: Beyond Building Housing – Building a Community. Affordable, Sustainable, and Innovative Housing Solutions for better Quality Living Erez ELLA	129
Cultural Dimensions and Entrepreneurial Innovation in Co-working Spaces. Socio-Spatial Insights from Tirana MSc. Belma AJAZI, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Xhimi HYSA, Dr. Gennaro MAIONE	153
From Informal Sprawl to Gated Communities. Evaluating Spatial and Functional Integration in Southeastern Tirana MSc. Alba GORA	164

IV. Demography and Economy: Demographic challenges and models in Albania and Beyond

Urban Planning in the Polycrises Era as “The Substance of Things Hoped For”. Research, Teaching, and Spatial Design at POLIS University, Albania Assoc. Prof. Dr. Llazar KUMARAKU	185
Land Distribution and Control in Urban Areas Dr. Diana BARDHI, Dr. Emre CECEN	195
Mapping the Invisible Boundaries. A Data-Driven Approach to City Delineation MSc. Andia VLLAMASI, Prof. Dr. Tamara LUARASI, Dr. Luca LEZZERINI	207

V. Urban and Natural Environment: Environmental Problems, Climate Issues and Other Environmental Challenges

Economic, Social, Environmental, and Landscape Values of Urban Agriculture and its Contribution to the Sustainability of Cities Emeritus. Prof. Dr. LUSHAJ	223
Environmental Challenges from Constitutional Perspective, Albanian Case Dr. Elsa TOSKA, Dr. Blerta MJEDA	236
Assessing the Impact of Urban Form on Air Quality. The Case Study of the Ish-Fusha e Aviacionit Neighborhood Dr. Gentjan HYKAJ, MSc. Greta SHEHU	245
The Price of Progress: Unveiling the Environmental Cost of Urbanization in Tirana through Life Cycle Assessment Dr. Kledja CANAJ	259
Albania Forest Futures: Rethinking Forests as Ecological Infrastructure for Sustainable Industrial Development Dr. Dan HANDEL, Erez ELLA	270
Assessing Water Quality and Pollution Sources in the ‘Kune-Vain-Tale’ Lagoon MSc. Sidorela CERENI	281

Integrating Land-River Interactions in the Marzenego River Contract. A relational approach to water governance	290
MSc. Sofia BESCHI, Dr. Filippo MAGNI	
Art in Public Spaces. Creative Cultural Productions	303
MSc. Iris CANAJ	
Children and Public Space. The Role of Urban Structure in Safety, Mobility, and Play in Residential Areas of Tirana	314
MSc. Sindi DOCE, Dr. Doriana MUSAJ	
Decentralization of Tourism – An Inter-Regional Approach	329
MSc. Hamez TREZHNJEVA, Dr. Doriana MUSAJ	



V. Urban and Natural Environment: Environmental Problems, Climate Issues and Other Environmental Challenges

Sustainability and resilience in the natural environment / Adaptive planning / Complexity in territorial development.

Air, water, and soil pollution / Ecosystem services for protected and urban areas / Strategic environmental assessments / Nature-based solutions / Urban biodiversity assessment.

Art in Public Spaces

Creative Cultural Productions

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Abstract

What is an urban space? What is culture, street art and vandalism? Public art not only brings the audience closer to artistic expression but also enhances the city's aesthetic appeal, which in turn fosters the emotional well-being of its residents and stimulates tourism, ultimately impacting the country's economy. Creating art in public spaces – whether through multidisciplinary festivals like the Festival of Street Performers, book-shaped benches like the “Stolibër” project, urban installations like “Reja – The Cloud”, murals, or initiatives like “The Visual Park” (Car-Free Day transforming neighborhoods into communal engagement spaces) – represents a form of activism. But what is activism? These artistic interventions do not merely entertain or beautify urban spaces; they also serve an educational purpose by addressing themes such as architecture, cultural heritage preservation, environmental awareness, socialization, tourism promotion, economic sustainability and more. Public space, as a shared domain, should be utilized by and for the community while also being protected by it – yet, it is often vandalized by the very people it serves. But where is the line between activism in public spaces and vandalism? How can an artist make creative use of public space without damaging the city or violating legal regulations? How do we use the space? Do laws governing public art exist? Do we think of public space like a common space and share responsibilities? Let's explore the challenges and opportunities that urban public art offers to artists and communities alike. This analysis will be based on research into personal experiences from the aforementioned projects, as well as insights from collaborators and responsible institutions regarding the authorization, utilization and preservation of public space for artistic purposes and bring some recommendations.

Keywords

Urban spaces, street art, activism, vandalism

1. Public spaces, art and vandalism

1.1. Understanding the terms

Based on Decision No. 130, dated 15.11.2018, on the approval of the regulation “On the conditions and rules of the occupancy of public space in the municipality of Tirana”

1. “Public Space, is the outer space of the subject, such as the sidewalk, street, square, garden, park and other similar, in the service of the community, where the management can be public and/or private, as well as all those assets that are not registered in the register of immovable properties in the name of the private party”. Public spaces for the public and the environment that are, according to law no. 8743, date 22.02.2001 “On the immovable properties of the state”¹

On decision No. 1096 dated 28.12.2015, “On the approval of rules, conditions, and procedures for the use and management of public space.”²

CHAPTER II - EXISTING PUBLIC SPACES

Article 4, Regime of existing public spaces

1. Existing public spaces, such as sidewalks, roads, squares, boulevards, parks, promenades, walkways, and other areas for public use, are inviolable and cannot change their purpose for public use except through planning documents as provided by law.
2. The part of the parcel or parcels built outside the building boundary of the buildings is considered public space and is used as such by the community of citizens. This space is not fenced, except when otherwise provided in the construction permit. The municipality covers the maintenance costs.
3. When the space, according to point 2, serves the community of owners, according to the law on co-ownership, the co-owners' assembly carries out maintenance and improvements following the rules established by the municipality, and bears the respective expenses. Otherwise, maintenance and improvements are carried out by the local authorities compulsorily, and the intervention costs are charged to the co-owners' assembly.

Article 5, Public spaces according to PDV (Detailed Local Plan)

(PDV - Detailed Local Plan, is an instrument in the Republic of Albania that specifies the provisions of the General Local Plan (PPV) at the level of one or more structural units. The PDV also establishes conditions for developing an area through building permits.)

1. Public spaces indicated in a detailed local plan, prepared and approved according to law, become the property of the public authority and are maintained by it, according to the PDV agreement, prepared based on the model attached in Appendix A.

¹ Decision No. 130, dated 15 November 2018, “On the Use of Public Spaces”, as amended, Municipal Council of Tirana. Official document, available at: <https://dpttv.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Vendimi%20nr.%20130,%20dt.%2015.11.2018%20Shfrytezimi%20hap%C3%ABsirave%20publike,%20t%C3%AB%20ndryshuar.pdf>

² Decision No. 1096, dated 28 December 2015, “On the Approval of Rules, Conditions, and Procedures for the Use and Management of Public Space”, Council of Ministers of Albania. Official document, available at: <https://qeverisjavendore.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Vendim-nr.-1096-date-28.12.2015-Per-miratimin-e-rregullave-kushteve-e-procedurave-per-perdorimin-dhe-menaxhimin-e-hapesires-publike.pdf>

2. Public spaces, outlined in approved urban studies, where development rights are allocated, are maintained and improved by the public authority at its own expense.

Law No. 41/2024, on amendments and additions to Law No. 107/2014, "On Territorial Planning and Development," as amended.³

Article 3, In point 1 of Article 4/1, "Public space," the following additions are made:

1. Before the phrase "playground," add the phrase "children's playground."
2. After the phrase "For state immovable properties," add the word "amended."

ART m.⁴

1. A form of representing the world through the creative reproduction of reality using artistic images; artistic creative activity. Folk art (national). Socialist art (revolutionary). Progressive art. Art work. Art workers (enthusiasts). To elevate to art.
2. ~E, ~ET. Branch or type of artistic creative activity. Dramatic (theatrical) arts. Fine arts, a common term for music, painting, sculpture, and architecture. Figurative arts, a common term for painting, graphics, and sculpture. Applied arts (or decorative arts), specific types of art creating objects for daily use, furniture, etc., which also have artistic value. Visual arts. Cinematic art. The art of painting (sculpture). Institute of Arts. The Seven Liberal Arts. (In ancient Roman terminology): arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy, grammar, dialectics, and rhythm.
3. The total production of a period or a country in the field of artistic creative activity, as part of a certain culture. Albanian art. Egyptian (Greek, Roman) art. Medieval art. Art gallery.
4. The set of rules and methods required to perform an activity skillfully and perfectly; a refined understanding of a craft and the ability to do it properly; mastery. Military art. The art of speech (writing). The art of directing (command). The art of war. Culinary (and tailoring) arts.
5. "Art for art" is a fundamental principle in reactionary aesthetic theory, viewing art as an end in itself, detached from content, social-political life, and the duty to serve broader masses. An art work can be a large construction, such as roads, railways, canals, etc., whose construction requires special effort.

VANDALISM m.⁵

Barbaric and relentless destruction of art and cultural monuments and all valuable things; indiscriminate looting, accompanied by murder and cruelty; a ferocious and barbaric act, behaviour of a vandal; barbarism, cruelty. Vandalism by fascists (Nazis, occupiers, chauvinists). Acts of vandalism. Engages in vandalism.

³

<https://planifikimi.gov.al/index.php?eID=dumpFile&t=f&f=7987&token=34ec9d8d32b2861471582e7632a6c8d45381c325>

⁴ Academy of Sciences of Albania (Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë). *Dictionary of the Albanian Language (Fjalori i Gjuhës Shqipe)*. Tirana, 2002.

⁵ Ibid.

1.2. Is street art a true art form?

What is art? - Regarding the “EDEN”:

Art is meant to move, to inspire...

And yet...

Over the past 2-3 decades, the art world has provided us with a sterile, near-clinical experience rather than focus on the desirability, excitement and inspiration that defines its core essence.

It has created walls between those who create it and those who love it; robbing many from that exhilarating experience, alienating many others from even considering it.

EDEN was founded in 1997 by Cathia Klimovsky with a vision to transform the relationship between artist and art lover.⁶

Why do we need art? It is a “must” or it is something that only belongs to the upper class, the wealthy strata of society? During this research, I will base myself on my personal experience. Should understand the difference between cultural and creative productions; we must mention that culture is made from people, but cultural productions are focused on heritage, traditional arts and the preservation of cultural and historical memory, while creative productions are based on innovation, applying artistic practices, generating profit and creating jobs through intellectual property.⁷ We learn the theatre’s story and we have learned also about Thespis: he was the first human to appear on stage as an actor playing a character in a play (instead of speaking as himself). Thespis also invented theatrical touring; he would tour various cities while carrying his costumes, masks and other props in a horse-drawn wagon.⁸

This theatrical touring, maybe is the beginning of the street theatre, while moving from a place to another and performing outdoor, he visited different cultures and met new people.

What is street art?

Carla H. Kruger said: “Blank walls, are a shared canvas and we’re all artists” (Kruger, n.d.). But how do we deal with the law? Street art has been illegal and even nowadays it is illegal in some conditions or otherwise it is called “vandalism”, not only on private properties, but also on heritage buildings... Artists found ways to just to avoid being caught by the police, so they invented stencils, to make their work faster. As street art becomes more popular, the art world and the general public have struggled to determine the best way to characterize street art.

Street art is a unique sort of outdoor art that, as the name suggests, is found on the streets. Many people do not identify this artwork as art and they often associate it with vandalism. It’s fair to say that some street art is legally viewed as vandalism, but that doesn’t answer the question on whether it can also be art.

⁶ <https://www.edenart.com/about>.

⁷ <https://www.culturepartnership.eu/en/publishing/course/lecture-5#:~:text=The%20concept%20of%20E2%80%9Cultural%20industries,jobs%20by%20creating%20intellectual%20property>.

⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thespis>.

Street art encompasses a variety of works such as graffiti art, sticker art, stencil graffiti, street poster art, urban knitting and wheat pasting, to name a few. It is the association with graffiti and tagging in particular, that makes it difficult for some people to define street art as a valid art form.

But street art, is not only a visual art. When You travel, have You seen musicians on the metro's stations performing? Have You been part of a juggling performance at the squares? Have You applauded a theatre play or danced at a street battle? Or even being part of flash mobs at the airports? Have You taken pictures of sculptures or installations in the neighborhood? If the answers are mostly "yes", then we can say that street art, it is a multidisciplinary art, that chooses public spaces as "a stage" where different artists can perform.

Is street art real art?

The increased popularity and reach of street art demonstrates that over time, we have grown to reconsider what is art and what is vandalism. Street art is now widely regarded as genuine works of art. The often-transient nature of street art can make it even more valuable in the fast-paced metropolis. Street art is something worth seeking out, or pausing to appreciate, photograph, and promote.

Due to its high visibility – often more so than traditional art seen in theaters, galleries, or cinemas – street art is gaining popularity and can even be promoted on a larger scale, thanks to the important and timely themes it addresses in both urban and rural environments. Can we distinguish whether it's vandalism or artistic activism? In the case of the former Radio Tirana building, graffiti was photographed on its façade – graffiti being a discipline of street art. However, since the building is a 2nd Category Cultural Monument (Institute of Popular Culture), any intervention on its facade is strictly prohibited (Instituti Kombëtar i Trashëgimisë Kulturore, 2024). Moreover, the painted letters (which are colorful in real life) convey no message, do not provoke discussion and lack any rebellious approach to social or political issues. They do not serve as a voice for citizens or present an alternative viewpoint; instead, they harm the building more than they draw attention to it. In another case, graffiti was applied to the Pyramid of Tirana (prior to its restoration), where the message attempted to advocate for its preservation. This partially fulfilled the mission of street art to amplify civic voices. However, the marble surface of the structure was damaged. Even though the Pyramid is not officially declared a Cultural Monument, it is part of the cultural heritage ensemble along the "Dëshmorët e Kombit" boulevard. In this case, the graffiti—whether freehand or stencil – can be considered partly street art and partly vandalism. Both buildings have been or are undergoing restoration and the graffiti has either been removed or is removable. This sets them apart from other visual artworks that are transportable and displayed in various galleries worldwide.



Figure 1. Former Radio Tirana, 2018.



Figure 2. The Pyramid, before reconstruction.

These deviant behaviors are often mistaken for street art, which in essence is based on rebellion, freedom of expression, creativity, and delivering messages in public spaces – often through guerrilla-style, unauthorized methods. Its purpose is to provoke critical thinking, deliver political messages, and spark reactions. Street art may be seen as “the voice of the city,” speaking to the masses, in contrast to the elitist nature of traditional art (Klimovsky, n.d.). This artistic approach aligns with activism and the role of being an active citizen – leading to the term activism. To understand the difference between destructive vandalism and street art that provokes thought and defends cultural heritage, we can refer to a mural by artist Franko Dine, created during the first edition of The Festival of Street Performers (2019), at “Kont Urani” Street in Tirana. It was painted on the surrounding wall of the former Radio Tirana building without touching the monument’s facade. The mural draws attention to the building’s value and history by depicting a radio microphone. Today, the building is undergoing restoration, thus resisting deterioration. Although the mural has faded over time, it served its purpose – becoming a landmark for photos promoting culture, art, the artist, the festival and even raising awareness among decision-makers. At the time, there wasn’t even a sign indicating the building’s monument status, but it should have been protected regardless of ownership.



Figure 3. Former Radio Tirana, during The Festival of Street Performers, (2019) **The child’s portrait it is intentionally covered.*

2. The importance of art in public spaces

2.1. Examples

1. How does globalism interfere on tradition, heritage, history, folk and architecture? Have You ever thought about cities after some years...? What it will be left? What happens with ethnography? Earlier, in Albania, we dressed up with folk clothes, which represented our geographical position also and everyone knew if we were coming from Shëngjergj or Petrela, from Tirana or Burreli, from Korca or Gjirokastra, only because of what we were wearing. What about now? No one knows from where we come from...sometimes either ourselves...are we losing the identity or only the origin and becoming global? Fast fashion is making us equal or without identity and just unifying us as “world’s citizens”? “Transient_cities” (including “Transient_Tirana” and “Venus and someotherheroes”) is a Willi Dorner’s project, an Austrian choreographer, curious about the landscape, architecture, photography and

ethnography. During his project, he overlaps different patterns, in different locations; controversial situations, mixing old and new, at the outskirts or centres, involving models with multiple folk elements and nowadays wearing and “freezing” the moment through camera shoot. After some years, we can use these pictures as a document of the past, to see where have we been and where we will be. This project is made in Tirana: - “A juxtaposition of old and new, of the unfinished and the partially destroyed” (Dorner & Rastl, n.d.) and in Skopje and they made pictures in this “transforming” areas, with “transforming” identities (Klimovsky, n.d.)



Figure 4, 5, 6. “Transient Tirana”.



Figure 7, 8, 9. “Venus and someotherheroes”.

2. Willi’s relation with architecture, it is shown also at the project “Bodies in Urban Spaces”, - a moving trail for a group of dancers. The performers lead the audience through selected parts of public and semi-public spaces. A chain of physical interventions set up very quickly and only existing temporarily, allows the viewer to perceive the same space or place in a new and different way – on the run. Appropriation of city spaces, architecture that exercises power over us and behavioural conventions in public spaces are put forward to discussion (Dorner & Rastl, n.d.). How does this makes You feel about the city? Does this point of view, photographed in public and semi - public spaces, changes Your perceptive of the city? As we may all see, the art in public spaces interferes in our everyday lives and might change our point of view in different ways. When we made the “Bodies in Urban Spaces” in Tirana, the audience also said: - “I had a lot of time without passing on these streets that almost forget that existed”, but at the same time, it helped us to see the tiny spaces we usually don’t think about those; if are functional or not, if are clean or not, etc.



Figure 10. “Bodies in Urban Spaces”.

3. Mural arts in Tirana, have raised the qualities not only in the aesthetic way, but are also helping in a functional way, such as addressing in the capital city. For example, now we orientate ourselves even by saying: - “Meet me at the “Building with arrows” or at “Ismail Kadare’s mural”, etc. Or even by remembering a period of time, such was the pandemic situation and honoring the doctors as heroes. Moreover, public art increases the value of private property and the well-being of residents too. As part of the 4th edition of the Street Artists Festival, we created a mural to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the former Kinostudio, highlighting the first Albanian film, “Tana”, near the building of the Central State Film Archive. This mural created an emotional moment even for the actress Tinka Kurti, who saw herself on the mural. This impact not only reminds us all to reconnect with our cinematography and its history but also emotionally touches individuals who are living parts of that history.



Figure 11, 12. Murals, “TANA” the first Albanian film and the first mural in Elbasan.

4. Through “Visual Park” project, we brought attention to the drivers to slow down while driving near the school, because the orange pumpkins are more visible than zebra’s white lines for pedestrians. Activism, is activism through art.



Figure 13. "Visual Park".

5. "Stolibër" is a functional project where benches seem like an open book. While putting a QR code, citizens and tourists can scan the code and read the biography of the author and some of his/her literature in different languages, written as a critic by young people also, to encourage reading.

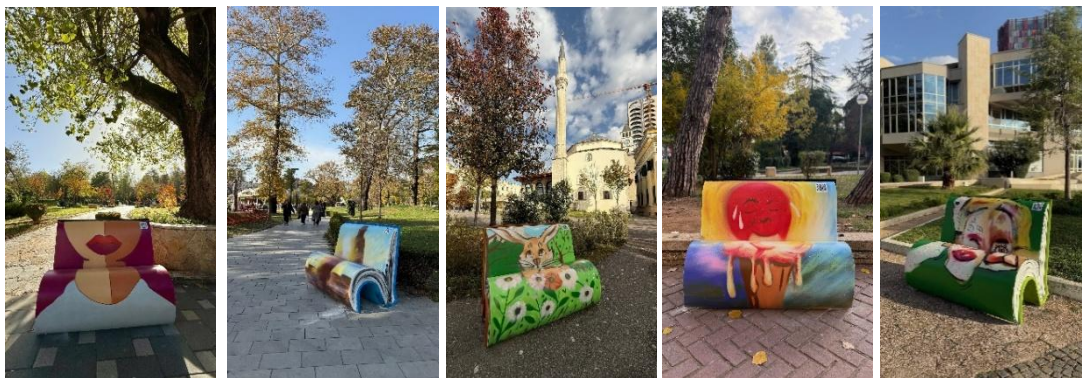


Figure 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. "Stolibër".

3. Creative Productions spent/bring money for the state's economy?

3.1. "Hardh Fest" example

Discussions on Creative Industries and Cultural Productions are often considered as "excessive expenses", this is how the state's budget, as well as the private sector, consider them when they are invited to invest in this creative industry, but the figures seem to contradict this "rumor". Now, we can also express ourselves with the term "creative economy". But how is Art in Public Spaces related to the economy? We all want to travel and get to know the culture of different countries! But not all of us travel for the sake of a creative production that is taking place in a place outside our place of residence, or outside our neighborhood. We travel also for cultural heritage and for history and for architecture, but also for artistic productions in cultural institutions or closed places, but also in open environments or public/urban spaces. If an urban or public space it a shared space, it can it also be in rural areas or on the outskirts of the city. How does a creative production affect the tourism of that area, in its transformation into an attraction and in the creative economy that circulates?

According to a study for a Festival in Rahovec; “Hardh Fest” in Kosovo, on their study it is written that; for every €1 of investment, (from the public and private sectors, in the form of financing/grants or even sponsorships), the local economy has generated €47.8. Some of this money are returned to the state’s budget, in the form of the collection of taxes or local fees from the local businesses (Vllasaliu & Jusufi, 2025).

3.2. Not only...but also social impact

On the other hand, art also has a great social impact, since people educated in art have greater emotional intelligence, which also affects the reduction of crime, which costs less money to the state’s budget to keep people in “conflict with the law” in the relevant institutions. But how can we massively educate the public with art? Initially, by “breaking” the mentality that art belongs only to the “elite” of the country... and this is going to be achieved, when we as organizers, aim to go towards the public, by organizing inclusive productions, in different locations. This can be achieved by producing cultural/creative productions in public spaces or even in shopping center, - although private, - but with massive attendance, train and bus stations, airports, neighborhood “pockets”, in suburban areas, on building terraces or stairwells, elevators, etc.

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