

University for the Creative Arts
Research Project Portfolios

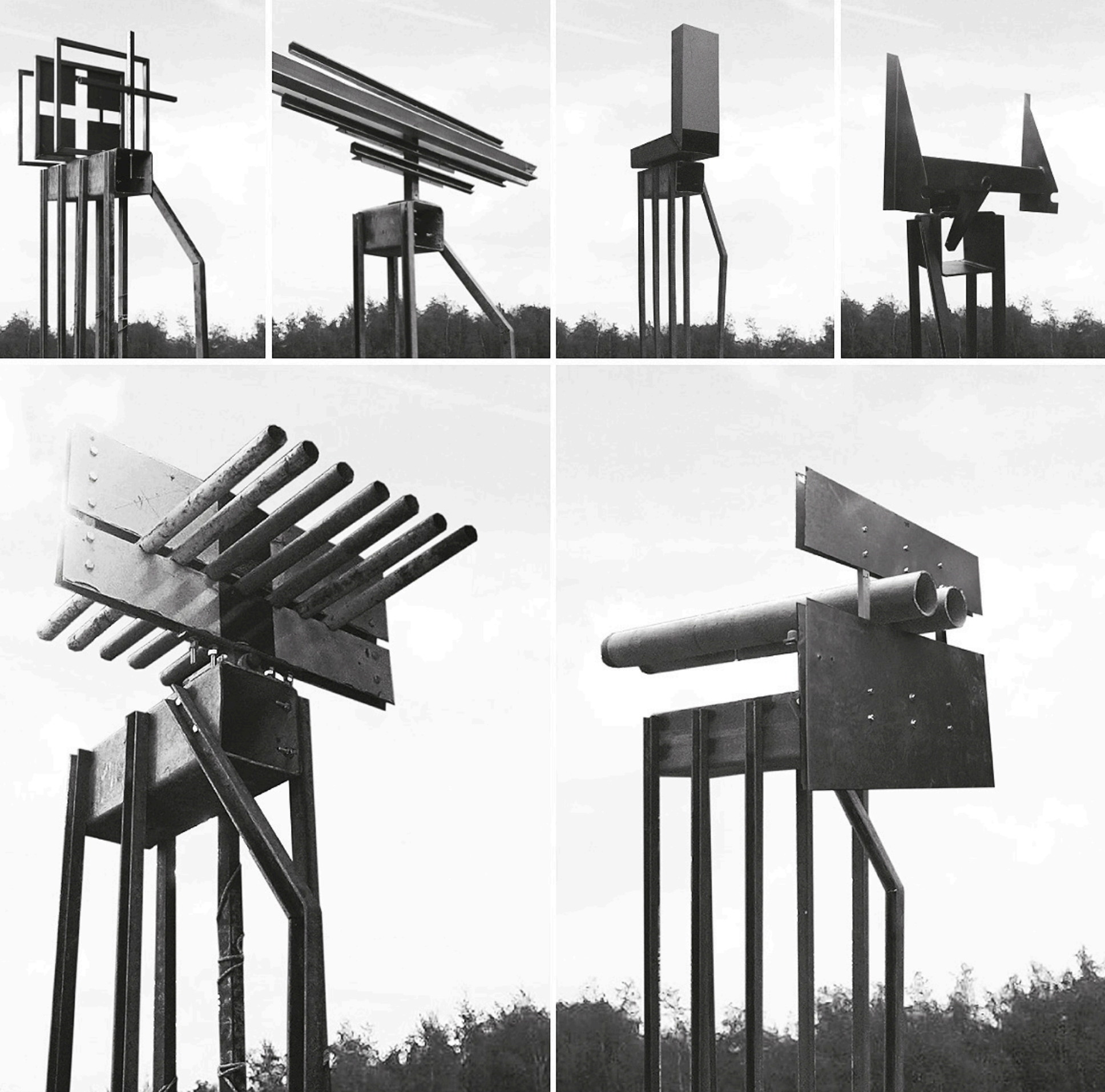
Art in the Expanded Public Field

By Gabor Stark



Project Details

Name of Researcher:	Gabor Stark
Name of Output:	ART IN THE EXPANDED PUBLIC FIELD
UCARO link:	https://research.uca.ac.uk/view/projects/Art_in_the_Expanded_Public_Field.html
Output Type:	L – Artefact; series of public, site-specific sculptures with additional performance element
Year and mode of dissemination:	<p>Component 1 EKR - THE FRIENDLY ARMY 2014-2016, Permanent public artwork: Six WW1 commemorative sculptures at East Kent Railway in Dover, UK. In collaboration with the East Kent Railway Trust</p> <p>Component 2 POLYCATOIKIA - UNITÉ DE LA COHABITATION 2017-18, Temporary public artwork: Art & architecture installation in Pafos, Cyprus. In collaboration with Emilio Koutsoftides</p> <p>Component 3 SPACE STANDARDS 2018, Temporary public artwork: Portable sculptures & artist walk for the ChalkUp 21 Art & Architecture Coastal Trail in Dover, UK</p> <p>Component 4 MEANDER - SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL 2018, Temporary public artwork: Artist residency, installation & concert at Kearsney Abbey in Dover, UK. In collaboration with composer Matthew Brown and the Leon String Quartet</p>
Key Words:	Public art, critical spatial practice, site-specific installation, heritage, collaborative place making, audience engagement
Funding:	<p>C1: Arts Council England & Kent County Council / £ 2,000.00</p> <p>C2: Pafos 2017 European Capital of Culture / € 2,000.00</p> <p>C3: Arts Council England / £ 250.00</p> <p>C4: Dover District Council & Arts Council England / £ 1,000.00</p>



EKR - THE FRIENDLY ARMY

WW1 commemorative project, six steel sculptures

East Kent Railway, Dover, 2014-2016

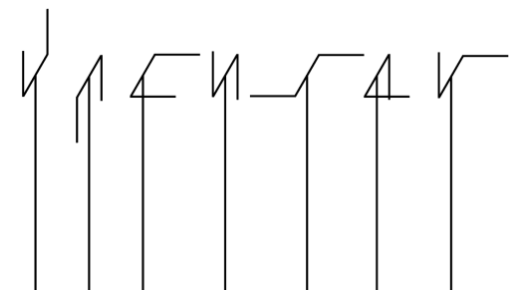
Synopsis

ART IN THE EXPANDED PUBLIC FIELD is a research output by Gabor Stark. Four site-specific public art projects all address the liminal space between architecture, installation and sculpture, and investigate the capability of collaborative art practice to positively impact on the co-creation of the civic urban realm. Rooted in the concepts of the Expanded Field (Krauss, 1979) and Critical Spatial Practice (Rendell, 2006), Stark's practice-led research contributes to theoretical and professional discourses about the role of the arts in culture-led urban regeneration and participatory placemaking.

EKR - THE FRIENDLY ARMY is a site-specific project commemorating the First World War, located in Dover, Kent. In the two-year research and realisation process Stark, together with volunteers of the East Kent Railway Trust, built six permanently-sited sculptures that trace the historical connections of the former industrial railway line to the war. POLYCATOIKIA was a temporary art and architecture installation in Pafos, Cyprus, realised by Gabor Stark and Emilio

Koutsoftides as part of the official Pafos 2017 European Capital of Culture programme. SPACE STANDARDS presents a set of seven portable sculptures devised by Stark for his performative artist's walk for the cultural tourism project ChalkUp 21, a new art and architecture trail that links selected 21st century buildings and public artworks along the Strait of Dover. MEANDER was a temporary installation and public event at Kearsney Abbey in Dover, realised during Stark's residency for the 'Art in the Park: Kearsney Interpreted' project. The four projects expand the public field by experimenting with new formats that synthesise the complex dimensions, protocols, and procedures of collaborative artworks in the civic realm.

This portfolio presents the aims, questions and processes that led to new insights and describes those insights. It presents images of the work and contextual information on the dissemination and recognition of the research.



SPACE STANDARDS

Portable sculptures & artist walk

CHALKUP 21 art & architecture coastal trail

Dover, 2018

Context

Gabor Stark's professional background is in architecture and urbanism. Focusing on temporal and programmatic aspects of spatial transformation processes, his practice, teaching and research agendas comprise cultural landscapes, regional development, urban regeneration and the integration of temporary uses into the participatory and community-led creation of the public urban realm.

Augmenting the formats and methodologies of his urban investigations, Stark has established a parallel art and research practice in which he explores the liminal space between architecture and art. Rooted in the concepts of the Expanded Field¹ and Critical Spatial Practice², Stark's public art projects pursue a practice-led research which actively contributes to the theoretical and professional discourse about culture-led urban regeneration and collaborative placemaking.

The works featured in this multi-component portfolio present four site-specific public art projects that contribute to this debate by testing the possibilities of contemporary art practice to catalyse and sustainably contribute to the activation of the civic urban realm. All works were commissioned and funded by public authorities and cultural institutions and as such were integrated into wider programme contexts and their respective project aims, protocols and procedures.

EKR - THE FRIENDLY ARMY (2014-16) was part of the Dover Museums and Arts Group (DMAG) project 'Joined Up'. Funded by Kent County Council and Arts Council England, and organised by Dover Arts Development, the two-year project brought together museums, heritage and the arts in the Dover District. On the occasion of the centenary of World War 1, artists were allocated to each of the ten participating, often volunteer-run organisations, where they researched the site-specific connections to WW 1 and created artworks that interpret each collection in novel ways. Gabor Stark was the artist commissioned to work with EKR East Kent Railway heritage line.

POLYCATOIKIA - UNITE DE LA COHABITATION (2017-18) was a collaboration between Gabor Stark and architect Emilio Koutsoftides for the official Pafos 2017 European Capital of Culture programme. One of seven proposals selected in the international open call 'Second Nature', the temporary art and architecture installation addressed the relationship between nature and culture by focusing on the human-feline cohabitation in Cyprus, an interspecies bond, which can be traced back as far as the 10th millennium B.C. The timber structure provided a man-made habitat for the Pafian stray cats and was installed in the Municipal Garden in the Ktima district for the duration of the European Capital of Culture year.

SPACE STANDARDS (2018), commissioned by Dover Arts Development, was Stark's artist response to ChalkUp 21. The cultural tourism project aspires to raise awareness and appreciation of contemporary art and architecture by linking selected 21st century buildings and public artworks into a 17-mile coastal trail along the Strait of Dover. Equipped with seven portable sculptures, the participants of Stark's collaborative and performative artist walk were invited to actively engage with Dover's natural and built environment and to 'do' art and architecture by collectively intervening in space.

MEANDER - SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL (2018) was realised during Gabor Stark's artist residency within the 'Art in the Park: Kearsney interpreted' project. Managed by Dover District Council, the Arts Council England-funded project aimed to engage visitors of Kearsney Abbey and Russel Gardens in Dover through arts and culture, and to bring new audiences to the two public parks. Stark's residency culminated in a public event combining a temporary spatial installation with a performance by the Leon String Quartet. The free open-air concert included the premiere of 'Meanderings', a string quartet written by composer Matthew Brown in response to, and in dialogue with Stark's sculpture.

¹ Rosalind Krauss, Sculpture in the Expanded Field, in *October*, Vol. 8. (Spring, 1979), pp. 30-44

² Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Space Between*, London: IB Tauris, 2006



POLYCATOIKIA

UNITÉ DE LA COHABITATION

Temporary art & architecture installation

Pafos 2017 - European Capital of Culture

Cyprus, 2017-2018



PolyCatOikia

Unité de la cohabitation



POLYCATOIKIA

UNITÉ DE LA COHABITATION

Temporary art & architecture installation

Pafos 2017 - European Capital of Culture

Cyprus, 2017-2018

Research Questions and Aims

Research questions:

How to collaborate and actively involve commissioners and project partners, public authorities, local residents, and urban communities in the research phase, the concept development, the construction process, and the maintenance of public art projects?

How to orchestrate communication-led engagement formats and processes that catalyse the active participation of lay audiences in the co-creation process of contemporary artworks in the public realm?

How to co-operate with other artists and representatives of other disciplines on the delivery and orchestration of inclusive public events?

Research aims:

To investigate the capability of public art to raise awareness for, and to actively impact on the site-specific socio-cultural interdependencies within urban contexts and their underlying spatial transformation and regeneration processes.

To contribute to the development of the civic realm and to expand the 'public field' by experimenting with new engagement and realisation formats that link the stakeholders and synthesise the complex dimensions of public art projects in novel ways.

Research Methods and Process

Whilst addressing and responding to the specific briefs, opportunities and constraints of each context, and thus varying in terms of their respective setting, genre, materiality and duration, the four projects follow a common set of research aims, and questions, methodologies and processes. Stark expanded the public field by experimenting with novel ways of realising contemporary artworks through the active involvement of the different stakeholders of public, and publicly funded art projects. Focusing on participatory and collaborative ways of working, Stark tested and developed new methods of involving amateurs and lay audiences in the concept development, co-design and co-production of each project

EKR - THE FRIENDLY ARMY

During the two-year long DMAG programme, Stark demonstrated a sustained engagement with the site and its community of volunteers, local residents and visitors. This manifested itself in repeated research visits and explorative walks, communication-led public engagement activities and a sequence of collaborative building workshops. The research and implementation process was structured in three phases:

Phase 1: Research & Concept Development (09/2014 - 06/2015)

Consultation of local historians and archives (Dover Museum, Dover Transport Museum); site visits, explorative walks and landscape surveys; public drawing workshops; on-site presentations of research findings; discussion of the emerging concept and design development with the wider EKR community of volunteers, visitors and local residents.

Phase 2: Co-production Process (06/2015 - 02/2016)

The artefacts were built exclusively out of materials that were found on site. The six steel sculptures were constructed by Stark and the EKR volunteers in twelve successive building workshops.

Phase 3: Installation Process (05/2016 - 04/2017)

In three successive installation workshops the finished sculptures were permanently sited in the landscape along the remaining EKR tracks and the adjacent network of public footpaths.

POLYCATOIKIA - UNITÉ DE LA COHABITATION

For the realisation of the Pafos 2017 project, Gabor Stark collaborated with the Cypriot architect Emilio Koutsoftides. Following on from their successful entry for the international open call for art and architecture projects, Stark travelled to Cyprus for a research visit in November 2016. Additional to their meetings with the commissioners, Koutsoftides and Stark engaged with local animal charities and started to prefabricate the plywood structure. Together with Pafos 17 volunteers, the installation was erected during a week-long public building workshop in February 2017. Originally scheduled to be dismantled in January 2018, the structure remained in-situ for seven further months and was finally disassembled in August 2018.

SPACE STANDARDS

Stark designed the portable sculptures that accompanied his ChalkUp 21 artist walk as “axiomatic structures” (Rosalind Krauss: Sculpture in the Expanded Field, 1979). Of identical line weight, the seven objects present all possible permutations of how to configure two timber sections perpendicularly on the top of a T-shaped pole. Whilst referring to nothing else than their intrinsic geometric-topological properties, the self-evident and abstract artefacts were devised by Stark as performative participation tools that enabled the participants of the spatial practice walk to become active co-creators of a new transitory public art format. The collective photographic records of the event are documented on the Dover Arts Development and ChalkUp 21 websites.

Research Methods and Process

MEANDER - SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL

The project was developed during Stark's artist residency within the Arts Council England-funded project 'Art in the Park: Kearsney interpreted' which aimed to engage people through arts and culture and to bring new audiences to the Russel Gardens and Kearsney Abbey parks in Dover. Working closely with the Environment Agency, the park manager, and the public engagement officer at Dover District Council, Stark realised a temporary spatial installation-cum-public concert in August 2018.

The physical artefact consisted of a linear, meandering timber structure and four Perspex mirrors. Like the 'Space Standards', the object was conceived as an 'axiomatic structure' (Krauss, 1979) and peripatetic object that explored different locations along the River Dour, the ponds and culverts in the park. Stark's residency culminated in the orchestration of a public event in which he combined the temporary installation with a musical performance by the Leon String Quartet. Attended by over one hundred visitors, the programme of the free open-air concert included the premiere of 'Meanderings', a new piece for string quartet by Canterbury-based composer Matthew Brown, written in response to, and in dialogue with Stark's sculpture. Brown's composition was recorded by the Leon String Quartet at the St Gregory's Centre for Music in Canterbury later in 2018 and performed by the Sacconi Quartet at the Customs House in Folkestone in 2019.



MEANDER - SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL

*Temporary spatial installation & public concert
Kearsney Abbey, Dover, 2018*



SPACE STANDARDS

Portable sculptures & artist walk

CHALKUP 21 art & architecture coastal trail

Dover, 2018

Research Insights and Contribution

Research insights:

Working with the parameters of each project context, i.e. the specific opportunities and constraints of the given site, the urban communities and targeted audiences involved, the programme partners, budget, objectives, and duration— Stark developed new formats for the partnership- and co-creation-based orchestration of public art projects. Project-specific insights are provided below.

Research insights:

EKR - THE FRIENDLY ARMY

The two-year-long project enhanced the practices of collective remembrance, collaborative placemaking and co-authorship through the development of innovative methods and formats for the realisation of the WW1 commemorative project. The empirical findings of Stark's research into the history of the site were translated into a family of six site-specific steel sculptures that assemble the gained knowledge in new ways. Stark's rigorous and sustained involvement of the diverse EKR community of volunteers, visitors and local residents, and the integration of their local knowledge, professional expertise and technical skills led to an active participation of groups and individuals that normally do not engage with contemporary art. The success of the project can be measured in the high level of identification with, and the sustained care and maintenance of the completed artworks by the EKR Trust and its volunteers.

Research Insights:

POLYCATOIKIA

The temporary installation instigated a debate about the ongoing spatial, social and ecological transformation processes within the Ktima district, the old centre of Pafos. Stark addressed the culture-nature relationship of the project brief by focusing on the human-feline cohabitation in Cyprus, an interspecies bond, which can be traced back as far as the 10th millennium B.C. Based on historical research and an evidence-based narrative, the project constructed new interpretations of the correlation between the problematic socioeconomic situation in Cyprus and the growing population of stray cats on the island. The timber structure references tropes of minimal art as well as the key architectural typologies that dominate the urban fabric of contemporary Pafos. The project provoked a debate about civic space, catalysed a renewed care of the local community for its urban environment and thus contributed to the ongoing culture-led urban regeneration process in Pafos' old town.

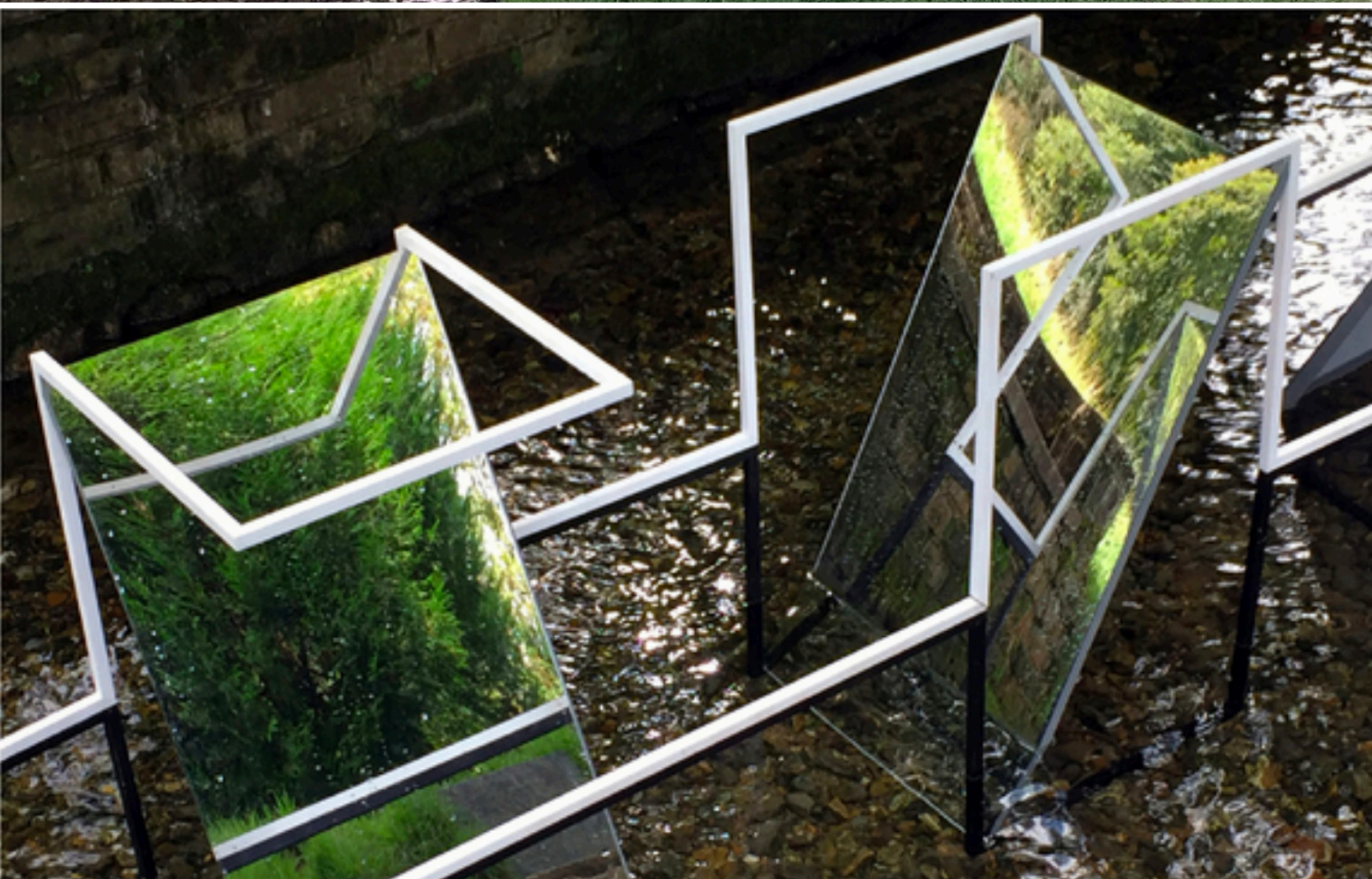
Research Insights and Contribution

Research Insights: SPACE STANDARDS

For his contribution to the ChalkUp 21 Art & Architecture Coastal Trail, Stark experimented with a new format for a transitory and performative public artwork that combines the genres of the artist walk and sculpture. Following Paul Klee's aphorism that "drawing is taking a line for a walk", Stark enabled the participants to become active co-creators of the event. Taking turns, the sixteen standard bearers used the abstract objects in multiple ways: as viewing frames, sculptural yardsticks, peripatetic semaphores and three-dimensional drawing tools. Collectively, participants took measures across Dover's urban, infrastructural and coastal landscape and produced transitory spatial interventions that, en-passant, triggered discussions about contemporary art and architecture amongst the members of the group as well as with the general public of passers-by.

Research Insights: MEANDER

In addition to his close collaboration with Dover District Council and Dover Arts Development on the delivery of the Arts Council England-funded "Art in the Park: Kearsy Interpreted" project, Stark cooperated with Canterbury-based composer Matthew Brown and the Leon String Quartet on the orchestration of a musical performance. Combining sculpture and music through a site-specific dialogue between the two art forms within the natural/cultural setting of the park, the public, inclusive, and free event attracted an audience of over one hundred visitors.



MEANDER
SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL
Temporary spatial installation & public concert
Kearsney Abbey, Dover, 2018

Research Dissemination and Recognition

Dissemination:

In addition to the physical presence of his projects in the public realm, Stark presented his practice-led research in guided walks, group exhibitions, public talks, conferences, and on digital media platforms.

EKR -THE FRIENDLY ARMY

Throughout the research and realisation process, Stark maintained a project blog on the Dover Arts Development website (24 entries). Photographs of the six sculptures were shown in a group exhibition at the Cyprus College of Art in Lemba (December 2015 - January 2016). Prior to their permanent siting, two sculptures were shown in the DMAG Joined Up group exhibition 'Inspiration = Dover' at the Maison Dieu in Dover (May 2016). Once the six sculptures were permanently sited, Stark conducted various guided tours and public talks about the role of the EKR line in World War 1 (2017). The project and Stark's blog entries are archived on the DMAG Joined Up legacy website.

POLYCATOIKIA - UNITÉ DE LA COHABITATION

Photographs of the installation were shown in the group exhibition 'Lines of Production - Producing Lines' at the Attikon Cinema in Pafos, Cyprus (September/October 2017) and the project was featured in Cypriot architectural magazines as well as in the Open Air Artworks catalogue, edited by Pafos 2017 - European Capital of Culture (2018).

SPACE STANDARDS

The project is featured on the website of the cultural tourism project ChalkUp 21.

MEANDER - SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL

The project is featured in the 'Art in the Park' section of the Dover District Council Kearsney Parks website.

Research Dissemination and Recognition

Follow-on activities:

In 2019 Stark participated in an international open call for a new public artwork at Fort Burgoyne in Dover. Based on his track record of realised projects, he was commissioned by The Land Trust in 2020 to realise his proposal for an archaeological shelter and communal gardening area. Part of the national Great Place Scheme 'Pioneering Places', the project's completion is scheduled for summer 2021.

Following on from a successful submission to the open call for the Cyprus Pavilion, the sound sculpture 'Peripatetic Landscapes' by Stark and Koutsoftides will be exhibited at the 17th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia 2021.

Influence of research:

Integrating his research into his teaching practice, Stark presented his research to students and staff at Canterbury School of Architecture in a research lecture in 2016.

In 2018 he was invited by UCA's Sculpture Question Research Group to deliver the keynote lecture 'Architecture in the Expanded Field' for the Sculpture Network programme 'Start '18: Art and Architecture'.

In 2018, Stark presented at the 'Museums in Context and Partnership' conference in York. Part of the 'Railway Cultures' research project, and organised by the University of Sheffield and the National Railway Museum, the conference examined the role of heritage institutions and the arts in urban regeneration.

Stark's expertise and knowledge gained in his public art projects were included in the 'How To Work With Local Authorities/ How to Work With Artists' guide, co-edited by Dover Arts Development and Dover District Council in 2019.

As part of UCA's research webinar series, Stark shared his research insights in the public online seminar 'Culture Through The Arts In The Public Realm' in 2020.



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