My Bachelor Thesis transforms seven outdoor spaces in the Housing Projects of Pili Axiou in the city of Thessaloniki. With the two essential axes being art and play, the project presents seven colorful parks, “seven urban scenes” – parts of an allegorical designed story on the stages of growing-up. These seven parts are inspired by Siddhartha’s journey. The project aims to provide my personal approach to the question: Where do the children play?
The Housing Projects of Pili Axiou in the city of Thessaloniki is a neighborhood designed gradually from 1967 following the models of modernism, with geometrical strictly functional buildings, sparsely located with large parametrical green spaces. An unlisted modern-day garden city lying between the degraded west districts of Thessaloniki. A symbol – landmark of their existence are the four 12-floor towers.
Taking under consideration the macroscopic analysis, SEVEN outdoor spaces are being chosen to host the project. The selected spaces highlight a variety of uses and aims throughout the area. They will be transformed to parks or plazas and they will serve as general movement axes, viewpoints, or the spaces that are related to one another. Here, follows a more focused analysis of the spaces of a demonstration of their existing conditions and possibilities. The analysis generally comprises of the existing design and materials, the vegetation and the seasonality, the seating and signage possibilities.
1 SETTING THE CONNECTING STORY - SIDDHARTA'S JOURNEY by H. Hesse

The seven chapters, servants to the two design parameters, which are play and art, are transformed to seven scenes, episodes of a connecting narrative.

The narration is inspired by the story of Siddhartha, Herman Hesse's character. Siddhartha was written in 1922 and since then it has become one of the most famous novels of all times. Siddhartha's story is a different contemporary bible of 20th century. It describes young shaman Siddhartha's journey of self-discovery and finally self-completion. A true hero on the conquest of experience, as it is earned through battle, mental challenges, choices and the constant fight with knowledge.

Inspired by Siddhartha's journey, seven parts are spotted, as the seven stages in a human's life, which lead to self-completion.

2 THE TWO DESIGN PARAMETERS - ART & PLAY

PLAY -
IMAGINING CREATIVE - ALEGORICAL - COLORFUL
PLAYSCAPES
PART 4
THE DESIGN
THE PATHS, THE GAME
AND THE FURNITURE

THE PATHS

Inspired by the work of artist Ellsworth Kelly, he used to set his yellow compositions in white canvases that were hanged in white walls/backgrounds. His intention was to surpass the boundaries of the canvases and to intrigue the actual boundaries of the artwork and the design itself.

Just like that, the paths, that connect the chapters, are to be seen as parts of the site. Their design is smooth, almost spontaneous, with no strict lines, or heavy constructions.

They are named after their colors.
- The blue path
- The red path
- The white path
- The pink path
- The yellow path
- The light blue path
- The purple path

HOW THE PATHS WORK

THE INTERACTIVE GAME

The mission is to carry a rock from the one chapter to the next. We can say that the rock is the ticket to visit the chapters. Kids can read the directions and play throughout the site. It is just a simple game, to keep the journey alive and to intrigue the exploration of the seven designed chapters.

THE FURNITURE

Seating (type 1)
wooden geometrical seatings
to replace the existing damaged seatings of the whole site
this type of seatings will be used in the majority of the seven parks

Baroque furniture (type 2)
wooden furniture
designed to bring a domestic character
they look like belonging to a living room
when used, they are sealed into the ground

Cement seatings (type 3)
seatings shaping with molds
an armchair, a desk, a chest of drawers and a nightstand
also imitating domestic furnishing
each one of the shapes is used as a seating

Lightings (type 1)
imitating inspired by lamps shades
placed in wooden beams
they are found both in the parks and in the paths
The first «stage» is THE CLEARING. A park to signal the beginning of the journey, it is the LEAVING HOME park. A stone circle appearing under huge and dense platanus and elms, a small hidden surprise, just like a clearing in the woods.

It’s, basically, a pocket park, meant to open up the road to the designed story. The tree gates symbolize the decision to let it go and to give yourself to the journey, and to the adventure.

The forms are inspired by the work of Artist John Cage.
CHAPTER 2

THE GIANT’S GARDEN

At the foot of the giant, the 12-floor tower, lays a garden with flowers and fruitful trees. Inspired by Oscar’s Wilde fairytale “the selfish giant”, where the garden that belonged to the giant, was the dreamiest place for children to play.

Here this garden brings the second chapter to life and the first challenge. Against the unknown or divine creature, A playscape with constructions/installations that “prove” the giant’s existence. A giant footprint and a mysterious large window-ruin, in the middle of a colorful yummy garden.

The blue path arrives. The red path begins.

- ceramic tiles installed over concrete
- concrete slabs 2x2 (m)
- stabilized ceramic floor with red sand
- rubber flooring
- collage of different wooden boards

equipment

seating possibilities
A LITTLE BACK PARK with colors and plenty of seatings. The park that answers to Friendship, in the busiest part of the site, next to a schoolyard. Under the trees, there is a geometrical cement construction with little seatings to bring an edition of the game “musical chairs”.

On the other side, there is an area with house-like furnitures, and adapted to the building façade, there is a framed space for movie projection and a grid-construction with climbing plants.

The red path arrives. The white path begins.
CHAPTER 4

LITTLE FORGOTTEN FOREST

This fourth park represents NATURE. A little forest where forgotten furniture of wood or cement lay between colorful shrubs and trees. It's a depiction of a tamed face of nature, which you can explore freely and wander around the trees. But nature always remains undisciplined and orphic. So, no corner of this forest is repeated and every move brings a new view. The furniture in baroque lines, looking like deriving from a surreal environment, also point this mystical and unpredictable character of the magic side of nature.

The white path arrives. The pink path begins.
CHAPTER 5

THE RIVER CROSSING

An installation with cubes in blue shades representing a frozen wavy river. And on top, the crossing. A wooden bridge or a prehistoric primitive hut to protect from the rising powers of the river. This highly allegoric playground brings the second challenge. A flight against nature. A RIVER CROSSING.

The pink path arrives. The white path begins.
CITY PARK is the most urban of the seven stages. With a much more intense rhythm, multiple uses and a plethora of materials and possibilities. A park-collage of materials and also collage of uses, where plenty of scenes are happening at the same time, just like an urban environment.

A basketball court, a ping-pong table, different types of seatings, different types of flowerbeds and plants, and a large area of free space to pick up different happenings.

The yellow path arrives. The light blue path begins.
A romantic yard in the most quiet of all the parks. To represent LOVE. A place defined by the absence of every type of equipment or seating. It invites the visitor to share an experience by sitting down. The floor is a mosaic of ceramic tile - fractures, inspired by the use of brush strokes of impressionists and post-impressionists.

The design is accompanied with large flowerbed and colorful shrubs.

The light blue path arrives. The purple path begins.
WHAT TRIGGERED MY PROJECT

The urban civilization will completely dominate the human world. It is predicted that by 2050, 7 billions of people will live in urban districts. As a result, a lot of questions are being stimulated, questions about the cohabitation and the everyday reality in these emerging conditions. Somewhere there, we come to wonder about the status of children and their existence, and to reconsider about the children play in the urban environment of tomorrow.

My thesis attempts to find and present those things and those qualities that should accompany the spaces for play in the future urban neighborhoods.

So, to conclude, here are the qualities...

Well you've cracked the sky, scrapers fill the air
Will you keep on building higher
"Till there's no more room up there"
Will you make us laugh, will you make us cry?
Will you tell us when to live, will you tell us when to die?
I know we've come a long way
We're changing day to day
But tell me, where do the children play?

"Where Do The Children Play"
Yusuf/Cat Stevens
album: Tea for the Tillerman

from
LITTLE BACK PARK

To me, children should play where there are flowers.
Flowers that are free and spontaneous, have colors, fragrance and hidden strengths

from
THE LITTLE HIDDEN FOREST

children should play in color.

Color that brings emotions, brings new views and battles rules and reality
Children should play in **craziness**
The craziness of disorder and of exploration

from **THE GIANT'S GARDEN**

from **THE RIVER CROSSING**

And finally, children should play in **dream**
In the un-disciplined element of imagination and adventure