



**Box 1**—Cover design by Anders Hofgaard (Node-Oslo/Berlin) for a doctoral thesis sounding a voice for citizenship within and beyond the state, in the context of the war on Bosnia (1992-95). That is, working for a framework of political rights for people whose identities are not fixed, but in becoming (like E.C. Escher's *drawing hands*). Supervisor: Fredrik Barth.

In completing my [doctoral thesis](#) *Travelogue—On contemporary understandings of citizenship among European Jews* (2010), I sensed that designing the contents into a book-volume (under the supervision of designer Anders Hofgaard [Node Oslo-Berlin]) was a *political act*, at the level of citizenship that I had inquired into during my fieldwork, and that I was addressing as a citizen according to that notion. I sensed that *designers* had the potential of being a class of professionals in the art world, who were citizens in the sense of *partaking of the life in the city*, in critical dialogue.

As a teacher of theory at an art school—KHIO—Oslo National Academy of the Arts—I related awkwardly to the notion of ‘student democracy’ because I thought that democracy should part of the *education*, not a supplement to classes that were taught (which for all their virtues were not always democratic) and mostly a part of the political organisation of the school. That is, moving democratic politics from school management to the *class-room*, and its larger context of an MA, with 3 specialisations in *design*: Graphic design & illustration, Clothing & costume design, Interior architecture & furniture design. *Modern living...*



**Box 2.** What remained from the building of the largest daily newspaper in Bosnia (Oslobodjenje/“Liberation”) before, during, and after the war in 1992-95. The way it looked during my fieldwork in Sarajevo, [Photo](#).

My question: is there naturally a ‘neutral zone’—free of partisan politics and governmental administration—that is non the less political in the sense of a professional participation in the life of the city (as a cultural powerhouse in counterpoint to the increasing corporate power)? My answer: no; there is no such zone that exists in and of itself, *if it is not modelled in education as a training-ground*. The first reference I discovered of someone who had been working actively on the question was Mary Louise Pratt (2005 p. 519) who coined the zone as a [contact zone](#):

«I use this term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today. Eventually I will use the term to reconsider the models of community that

many of us rely on in teaching and theorizing and that are under challenge today.» When I started working with KHiO, as the MA programme received an increasing number of international students (and in the wake of #METOO and BIPOC turmoils along with the expression of gender through LGTBQ+) Mary Louise Pratt's conceptualisation of the *contact zone*, provided a working-definition of a new school situation. That is, where people can be who they are and find out more about it.

What I had to work with, as a teacher. In my fieldwork baggage I also had the experience with a 'neutral zone' in the sense of my first question above. The *contact zone*, in Mary Louise Pratt's sense, is clearly *not* a war-zone. But is neutral? During the war on Sarajevo, a Jewish humanitarian organisation—*La Benevolencija* ('the good will' in Ladino/Jewish Spanish)—claimed a neutral position, as the Jews (considered an ethnic group) had no part in the war: it received international aid, organised pharmaceutical distribution, social health care and a *soup kitchen*.

The soup-kitchen was organised by a former hippie—Josef Abinun (Cicko)—who had previously owned and run a restaurant called *Lucifer* (they served hot food). His soup kitchen, that was located in the premises of the Jewish Community during the war, was a place he *sternly* dedicated to culture and music: politics were *forbidden*, as the guests belonged to all parties of the warring ethnic groups. His warning: "if they talked of politics they would be asked to *pay* for the meal". He was defying *war* in his own way. The leader of the humanitarian organisation had a different angle.

Jakob Finci stated: "we have done this to show the world that not all Jews are Israeli soldiers." After the war, the organisation relocated to [Amsterdam](#), and with its experience with radio-transmission in peace building/keeping it became involved in Rwanda, in the wake of the Hutus' genocide of the Tutsi. Jakob Finci, on the other hand, became a diplomat: an Ambassador of the Bosnian Republic abroad, notably to Switzerland. The organisation that he had led during the war on Sarajevo, became the Swiss of that war. Hence the question: what do we think about that?

Could an 'open zone' be better than a 'neutral zone' to cultivate what I would call, from lack of a better term, a democratic skill-set? Is Hakim Bey's definition of the [TAZ](#) (temporary autonomous zone) a candidate framework to make this shift?

At KHiO's design department Ida Falck Øien (Clothing & Costume) hosted a workshop on the [DASart](#) method of feedback. It is a method for assisting artists in becoming to get a sense of their need, through a method of feedback that does not proceed by thumbs *up*/thumbs *down*. It is open in the sense that identities are not readymade at an art school but in *becoming*. That's what we do...

The DASart method may be part of a larger framework of democratic enskilment, in which communicative interaction has the chance of developing along *other* lines than "yes you are!—No, I'm not". An art school is a place of shaping and being shaped. Identities are open and unfinished. The question is then: how can we contribute in the wake of war and its *barricaded* identities? In Norway, the legacy of Nansen-passport (League of Nations 1920-1942) focuses on working for the rights of *civilians*. Establishing citizenship within and beyond the state. My position is that the situation of the civilians of Gaza needs to be separated from the war between Israel and Hamas. We can work for an agenda of a new generation of Nansen-passports so that the civilians in Gaza *can get out*.



**Box 3**—Photo-montage from shoot by Dagfinn Carlsson who joined me on my first field-trip to Sarajevo in 1996. Though the peace treaty was signed (Dayton 1995) the situation was still not stable. During the war the city had been shelled at a pace of ~1000 grenades/day. During our stay there were only a few, and the city was not disarmed. It was a war on *civilians*...