

Open Call B_Tours Vilnius 2017

Introduction to B_Tour

B_Tour, established in Berlin in 2013, is a nomadic curatorial platform dedicated to artistic guided tours, audio walks, and experimental navigation in the field of performance and visual art. B_Tour presents projects by artists, social and cultural experts, architects, activists and experts of everyday life who suggest creative approaches to explore, relate and interact with cities. Projects often look at the intersection between art and art mediation, walking as a performative and/or political act, narratology, anti-tourism and walking as a corporal experience. B_Tour reflects of notions of locality and community in the context of the urban, human-technology interface and geographical hegemony. The projects implement innovative approaches to participation and cultivate new discursive artistic formats.

B_Tour presented 5 festivals and individual projects by approx. 60 artists and artist groups in Berlin, Belgrade, Leipzig and Copenhagen. Apart from the main program of mobile projects presented in the public space, the programs included a series of panel discussions about current urban matters called B_Talks; a public screening program, workshops, networking events and special programs for young people.

B_Tours Vilnius 2017. Dystopia

Dystopia has long been a form for authors and artists to reflect about past and current social predicaments by articulating disturbing future scenarios. Today, with environmental precariousness, cultural and religious collisions and violent political and economic uprisings, dystopian fictions channel the anxiety of citizens around the world. As the nervous centres of global economic and political systems, cities, more than other human environments, are where these dystopias unfold.

‘Utopia, whether with a sign of plus or minus, always evolves around the city’, said Lithuanian philosopher Leonidas Donskis during the Architecture Fund talk in December 2014, ‘We should not believe in theorists who talk about utopia, dystopia or eutopia as if they happened in books, in literature. No, they happened in the city.’

Indeed, Vilnius has seen some of the ‘real’ dystopias. Perhaps the biggest of them is becoming increasingly less visible in the rapidly developing city centre, but can still be witnessed in the ‘sleeping districts’ surrounding it. It is these spaces where the utopia of everyone equal and united under communist ideals turned upside down and became a dystopia of what historian Tomas Vaiseta calls the ‘society of boredom’ – passive individuals losing any sense of meaning in the context of ideology they do not relate to, and feel unable to change.

Today, in contrast, the change is fast: geographical outlines, governing systems and demographics of the cities are shifting most abruptly and at higher rates than ever before. Cities are becoming more influential than nation states as large urban agglomerations connect by inexorable streams of information, capital and goods. But while this connectivity make cities a prolific source of innovation, inspiration and opportunity, it also breaks social relations and fragments societies. Digital technologies, a primary tool of this connectivity, increasingly serve the interests of their creators more than their users. Almost like the characters of Orwell’s

‘Nineteen Eighty Four’, we are becoming locked in the small enclosed worlds surrounded by screens; not aware of the sophisticated surveillance systems used to monitor our behaviour; unable to distinguish facts from tales in the blurring lights of new media journalism, PR and propaganda.

The same idea of global networks manifests in politics through power games that cause civil wars, mass displacement and economic migration. In this context, Lithuania’s articulations of fear are again based on the dystopian scenarios: a society that is dying (due to rapid aging caused by huge emigration) or a society at risk of losing its national identity (due to influx of immigration from the war-torn regions) – just like the one described in Michel Houellebecq’s near-future dystopian novel ‘Submission’.

If dystopia, as Donskis said, is inseparable from the city, then we can discover it not only through books, but in the same way we explore urban landscapes – through an act of walking, a touchstone of every B_tour.

What dystopian territories of Vilnius are prone for discoveries? How does the city look like in the context of global interconnectedness? What other dystopian scenarios can be relevant to the city, or the country, today? B_Tours Vilnius invites artists to imagine the dystopian future, focus on dystopias or repressed collective traumas of the past or look into the notion of dystopia antagonistically – by proposing positive alternatives instead.

B_Tours Vilnius will take place in September 1-10, 2017, as a collaboration between the Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, the Architecture Fund in Vilnius and B_Tour Berlin. We aim to initiate a transdisciplinary exchange based on active spectatorship in contemporary public art and to creatively and collectively pave ways for reflecting on the environmental, social, economic and cultural challenges and opportunities emerging in urban settings. Subjects such as collective trauma and memory, resources and luxury, post-industrial economies, political self-determination, cultural identity, formal and informal economies, global mobility and urban ecology will be scrutinized in participatory and inclusive manners.

Checklist: What is a B_Tour?

- A B_Tour is an artwork in itself.
- A B_Tour is based on a route that has a beginning, middle and an end both physically and conceptually.
- A B_Tour is a platform for an interaction between a guide/artist, an audience and a space.
- B_Tours are engaging in the sense that they call for participation and enable exchange.
- A B_Tour questions the convention of a guided-tour and challenges its format **but** it is not an “alternative city touristic tour”.
- A B_Tour is conscious of the existence of multiple narratives and truths of a site. Therefore, a B_Tour does not provide THE true perception of a it.
- A B_Tour is not a spectacle and therefore customarily does not utilise visual/theatrical effects which temper with the space as it normally is.

Please notice:

- This open call is open to artists, architects, urbanists and other experts who are based in/are from Lithuania (artist from Lithuania who are working abroad may also apply).
- Applications will be accepted in English only.
- For the moment, the festival cannot promise specific artist fees and production costs. This will be discussed in detail after the selection process.
- Any media that supports your application (video, visuals, press clippings, portfolios) can only be submitted via the electronic form by including links to the relevant materials online.
- Answers will be given by 23/01/2017. We might ask you for additional information before making a decision.
- The selection of the projects for the festival is by no means a critical reflection on the creative quality of the proposal or the artist, but a result of an assessment of the feasibility and relevance of the project and past experience of the applicant.
- B_Tours Vilnius will take place all over the city and the geographical spread of the tours will be a determining factor in the programming.
- We will also strive to maintain an equal spread regarding the participating artists' gender and age to create a festival that is versatile and inclusive.
- B_Tour aims to create an environmentally friendly festival, therefore: we only accept online applications and we prioritize environmentally conscious artistic production.
- A core aim of B_Tour is to serve as a meeting point for artists working in the field of public art to network, strengthen their practice through exchange with other professionals and create projects which react to the cultural, geographic and social settings in which the festival is presented. Therefore, we place high emphasis on the presence of the artists during the days of the festival.
- Since the B_Tours are conducted in public spaces we require all artists to obey the legal, conventional and reasonable restrictions of use of public spaces. This means tours should not involve destructive, illegal or any sort of violent acts towards individuals and/or the surrounding private and public property. We encourage artists to be extremely thoughtful in their use of imagery, texts and performative behaviour. Tours that include sensitive material should note so in their project description and should include an age restriction.

Before filling out the online application form, please have a look at the following checklist and B_Tour website: <http://b-tour.org/index.html> to make sure your project fits festival and festival fits your work.

The **deadline to send in your proposal is 5th January 2017.**

Here is the link to our online application: http://b-tour.org/b_tours-vilnius-open-call.html

If you still have question, contact us at: info@b-tour.org

We look forward to your submissions

B_Tour, LNDT, Architektūros Fondas