

B_Tour concept

B_Tour is an organization which revolves around guided-tours-as-an-artistic-strategy. The tours presented in B_Tour Festival provide both a fertile ground to bring audiences and artists together; and generate an artistic and local discussion about urban environments. B_Tours aim to provoke various forms of creative and active civil participation. Therefore, B_Tour is a platform for artists and citizens to network, share, collaborate, cooperate and exchange ideas about cities they live in. B_Tours utilize participatory creative strategies in order to allow underrepresented narratives to surface and question the hegemonic discourse that shapes cities. This is why B_Tours explore for instance the politics of public space, gentrification and civil responsibility.

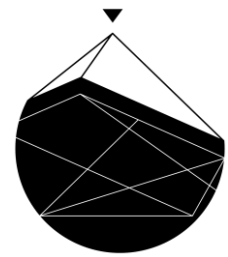
Communication in Urban Space – The Characteristics of a B_Tour

A B_Tour generates an interaction between a guide, an audience and a space. The guide is not necessarily the creator of the tour but mostly is. B_Tours are engaging in the sense that they call for participation and enable exchange. On a route through the public space, a guide leads an audience along a narrative and is therefore a narrator interpreting the urban space. A B_Tour simultaneously deals with its meta-level and its particular theme/narrative/site-specificity. It questions the convention of a guided-tour and challenges its format. A B_Tour is conscious of the existence of multiple narratives and truths and presents the audience with one of these. It doesn't provide THE true perception of a space. A B_Tour is not a spectacle. It is not to be confused with a conventional touristic "alternative city tour". The tour tends to a subtle approach towards its environment. This subtleness and attentiveness is the result of the guide's personal connection (artistic research, educational background, locality, interests etc.) with the space.

Walks – Walks as Artistic Practice

In recent years, numerous artists, curators and theatre directors have insistently explored the variety of possibilities which walks, participatory strolls, alternative mapping and guided tours provide. These artistic strategies developed out of sciences such as promenadology, psychogeography and strollology. Nevertheless, the differentiation between them has never been

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established. In order to work more precisely with these terms and enable artistic innovation within these formats a definition/distinction might be useful.

Walks can be well defined by Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "Nomadism". The nomadic way of life is characterized by movement across space which stands in sharp contrast to the rigid and static boundaries of the State. For a nomad "[...] a path is always between two points, but the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own. The life of the nomad is the intermezzo". Therefore, a walk is always about the process one goes through when she is "on the way" rather than when she is trying to reach a destination.

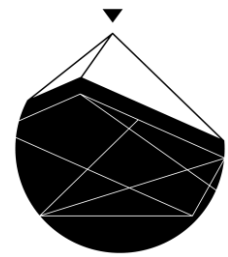
Tours – A Guided Tour as an Artistic Strategy

A tour on the other hand, utilizes the framework of the differentiating, external, strategic, organized striated space. Tours are attentive and reactive to the stratification of the system and the apparatus of control within the very production of space.

Tours target and are associated with urban environments. Urban environments cultivate, establish, maintain and sometimes, at their rigid edges, manifest different aspects of mechanisms of control.

Deleuze and Guattari stated that "the city is the striated space par excellence". The striated space is in contrast to the nomad's smooth space. Smooth space is a space of affects, more than of properties. It is haptic rather than optical. It is an intensive rather than extensive space, one of distances, not of measures and properties. It is a Body without Organs instead of an organism and organization. Tours are in a way opposite to the nomad's walk. They relay on the stratified space and pre-mapped starting points in order to challenge and infiltrate it with destabilising tendencies. They reframe urban planning, traffic control, recycling, rubbish and waste management and highlight them as non-neutral socio-political structures that act in a non-neutral political space.

B_Tours often implement the Situationists' approach of "détournement". This is a method of interpretation, reinterpretation and reordering of pre-existing materials to expose their banality or function within a system of control. This technique involves creatively reconstructing social elements for the purpose of denaturalizing and exposing the system's bulimic reintegration of all social elements. Accordingly, by restructuring conventions within a conventional space, tours also present a variety of geographical imaginations which are hypotheses or assumptions regarding how space and relations in space initiate and shape societal processes and changes, and how these processes



and changes are spatially expressed. Within B_Tours the voice of the narrator must be clearly stated. B_Tours are not walks since traditionally walks do not state the voice of a narrator.

Art and Politics – Socio-Political Engagement

B_Tour Festival gives a platform to projects which use guided tours as a tool to develop a discourse about public spaces. B_Tours aim to highlight the numerous ways people form spaces but also the ways spaces condition each and everyone's needs, wants, customs and habits directly and indirectly. They incubate social involvement; the communal, creative intervention in a public space is in itself an exemplary civil act. Therefore, even when participating as an audience member or just as a bystander, B_Tours generate ways for engaging communities in urban formations. Therefore, a B_Tour is an artistic practice and a political practice as it calls to rethink and criticize the environments we occupy.

Think Glocally – B_Tour's Traveling Format

B_Tour Festival is based and presented in Berlin; however, it is also a traveling festival and is hosted in a different city each year. The festival is brought into cities which need this format to strengthen the local urban discourse and connect to the international one. B_Tour Festival targets cities that are in transition and which are on the periphery of mainstream culture. The festival is a flexible format. Its conceptualization is readjusted every year and remodeled according to the different cities and contexts it infiltrates. This traveling format also generates an international network of artists, urbanists, experts and communities which enables the circulation of knowledge that can then be implemented within local context. It encourages a wider exchange between city dwellers in different place in the world.

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