

The Metropolitan Art Organisation



The non-profit metropolitan art organisation urban dialogues is treating questions of urban change and flux during the last ten years through a series site-specific projects in Berlin.

Starting point was a project entitled urban dialogues (outside) in 1998. The project addressed the final moments of the reconstruction of central Berlin in form of an artistic visual and performative intervention.

The idea of exploring a particular area within its contemporary usage as a spatial system within its own history and through its silently slumbering visions has been repeated in various areas in Berlin and other European cities through a multitude of artistic approaches.

The artistic principle of urban dialogues is to bring aesthetic sensitivity to the rapid changes of place and perspective within the city landscape. Since 2002 urban dialogues has worked within the social regeneration programmes in urban crisis zones, focussed on integrating youth and young adults in the production of art and culture.

The artistic projects of urban dialogues which began in the centre of Berlin as a scrutiny of the dramatically changing environment, have since then developed in a manifold artistic discourse with the phenomenon of urban spaces, urban literature and urban signs.

In 2004 urban dialogues presented the exhibition Non Standard Cities in the former meat-packing district Berlin. The show featured 13 international and German artists dealing with alternative architecture and city planning, e.g. Marjetica Potrc, Hans-Christian Schink, Sofie Thorsen and Matthias Müller.

Within the international exhibition project ISLANDS+GHETTOS, urban dialogues has been a co-operation partner of an international project carried out by the Heidelberger Kunstverein. It has drawn attention to the worldwide phenomenon of territorial isolation and social seclusion. The project aimed at gathering contributions from artists, architects and urbanists, e.g. Carey Young, Multiplicity, Peter Coffin and Harun Farocki, that discuss the urban effects of such tendencies, which are to be found more and more frequently throughout the world. The project has shown the ways in which the final social utopia of the 20th century - the dream of the globalized borderless world - has been replaced by the reality of new private and economic lines of demarcation. A fact which also becomes more and more relevant for the European cities.

From 2007 to 2009 urban dialogues has organised an urban research project on resemblance and diversity in four European Metropolises. The youth art project Signs of the City - Metropolis Speaking employed digital photography and new media to explore the sign systems of London, Berlin, Barcelona and Sofia. Young people, guided by professional artists, created a visual inventory and documented their urban life at the same time. This phase of research took place in approximately 35 workshops in all participating cities. Several exhibitions in the participating cities were curated during the concluding presentation phase of the project in autumn 2008.

Signs of the City - Metropolis Speaking has been selected as best practise for innovation and creativity by the European Commission in 2009.

The projects have run with the support of, amongst others, the Capital Cultural Fund Berlin, the Cultural Programme of the European Commission Culture 2007, the Senate for Urban Development Berlin, the Youth and Family Foundation Berlin, the Sociocultural Foundation Bonn, the Foundation for the Dramatic Arts Bonn, the Spanish Embassy in Berlin, the British Council Germany, Siemens AG and Allianz AG. urban dialogues is member of the Cultural-Political Society in Bonn.

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