

CONNECTING CITIES: Artists' Call For Proposals 'INVISIBLE and VISIBLE Cities 2015'

In 1972 Italo Calvino wrote about his 'Invisible Cities' a romantic love poem to the city, which has the variety and liveliness of overlapping stories and interdependences in it. Our today's modern cities are hybrid structures in which technology is invisibly interweaved in the perception layers of our everyday lives. These cities produce real-time urban data and introduce control mechanism. In a state of digitalisation, between surveillance and data collection, we look out for a tangible manifestation of immaterial structures.

Curatorial Theme

With the curatorial theme of '*InVISIBLE and VISIBLE Cities*' we want to develop an awareness on the changes which are hardly visible to the eyes and are underlying our nowadays cities.

The 'Visible City' perspective aims to rethink the debate of visible versus invisible without falling in the trap of focusing on new gimmicks at the expense of content, where drones or QRcodes, VR, phone apps, GPS, Kinect, EEG interfaces, large urban displays, become the core of a discourse, which goes much further beyond its technological surface.

We call for artistic scenarios to visualise invisible, embedded 'smart' urban infrastructures and analyse their impact on the technological transformation of our society in a broad and public discourse. Open or hidden data should be provided a visible layer beyond the aesthetics of data visualisation. Different positions frame this discussion of our future cities within the urban challenges i.e. of climate change, energy consumption and transport systems. We want to approach the 'Visible City' through these three main questions:

Hybrid Cities

How can we read and interact with the urban space and which stories / processes are hidden within?

The open public access to data and the free re-usage of data and information lead to the question, how Administration / Economy / Society can work together to open the potentials of urban data. Also, Sensor Networks, becoming our 'urban furniture' with digital sensors, provoke discussions about the nearly invisible interweaving in our urban environment as technology seems to be disappearing. Augmented Reality creates a new digital layer in the urban space and expand as well as enrich our perception of space to open up a new layer between the physical and virtual, the visible and invisible infrastructure – a space for imaginary urban landscapes?

Digital Citizenship

How can citizen shape their digital urban environment and find new strategies for active / critical data collection processes and citizen's engagement?

The aspect 'Digital Citizenship' focuses on creative city making through the public. The idea of community building is challenged through the fact, crowd-sourced data (i.e. OpenStreetMap, Foursquare) offer a democratisation of information for our daily life. On the other hand, private and public institutions are tracking data and thereby creating a situation between information services and surveillance. We want to investigate the emerging role of digital citizens and develop tools to become an active as well as critical agent in the city.

Translocal Connectivity

How can we act physically in one place but mentally / emotionally appear in a different place through interactive urban scenarios and various interfaces?

The desire of the 'Visible City' approach is to critically react to phenomena, such as the creation of technologically sophisticated data tracking/visualisation methods, which dismiss political and sociocultural content (loneliness vs. connectedness; "I follow people because I don't have anything else to do."). We want to explore this political / sociocultural potential, which evolves through the translocal exchange between citizens with Internet-technologies as an interface to a virtual world.

Leading questions are: What matters to be visualised? How does the idea of smart citizens – in the context of intelligent cities and collaboratively technological design – find its legitimation in a data-collection-overwhelmed world?

The aim is not to represent reality, but to make a transformative/critical proposal with the question: Beside enhancing and optimizing (Smart City), empowering and improving (“open source urbanism”), do we also want to explore other approaches, maybe less “useful” but as meaningful; more poetic, narrative, contemplative or situationist? The call focuses on projects that reveal new levels of perception to an invisible layer of our nowadays cities.

In/Visible City 2015 will take place in Berlin, Brussels, Helsinki, Linz, Liverpool, Madrid, Marseille, Montreal and São Paulo and Zagreb. The Connecting Cities' infrastructure to be considered by the artists for this Call for Proposals corresponds to the permanent and temporary urban media infrastructures of these cities (see www.connectingcities.net/infrastructure). Nevertheless we also welcome proposals directed to other partner cities of the Connecting Cities Network. We will forward these proposals to the partner cities who might then decide to join our 2015 Connecting Cities Events.

Submission deadline

Please submit your proposal until 31. October 2014, CET 23:59h via the application platform of Connecting Cities Network partner Medialab-Prado on xxx.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

// Areas for the Visible City

- Reflecting the role of agents/human beings in surveilled public space
- Data between fear and opportunity
- To demonstrate or deny a political position in data as to reflect descriptiveness
- Providing a critical artistic perspective towards data visualisation
- Rethinking institutional infrastructures
- Invisibility as a citizen practice
- Surveillance vs. Connectedness
- If projects want to "create change", they have to explain the role of the visualization in that process (the visualization for example acts as an exchange platform).
- Cooperations with students/institutions (educating systems), community relationships

Technological issues

An urban media artwork that...

- takes into consideration all technological aspects (resolution, size, daylight compatibility, content management systems, internet connectivity, site specificity etc.) of the Connecting Cities infrastructure in at least one of the participating partner cities (Berlin, Brussels, Helsinki, Linz, Liverpool, Madrid, Marseille, Montreal, Riga, São Paulo, Zagreb). Details about the CCN infrastructure in each city can be found at www.connectingcities.net/infrastructure.
- provides the technological possibility of a networked scenario in which it connects at least two participating cities
- possibly uses locative commons and open source software that encourage community knowledge sharing
- possibly facilitates alternative encounters with the public space through innovative interfaces like motion tracking, data visualisation processing, semantic web, mobile and embodied interaction interfaces, streaming technologies, etc.

FORESEEN ACTIVITIES - IN/VISIBLE CITY 2015

In/Visible City Special Artists' Activity: *Connecting Cities Lab & Residency 2015*

- Artist Workshop / Prototyping Lab at Public Art Lab, Berlin during transmediale, in January 2015
- Connecting Cities Research Residency 2015 à 30 days at Public Art Lab, Berlin; Ars Electronica, Linz; FACT, Liverpool in Spring 2015.

Presentation of the Selected Projects: *Connecting Cities Events 2015*

- Connecting Cities Events in Berlin, Brussels, Helsinki, Linz, Liverpool, Madrid, Marseille, Montreal, Riga, São Paulo, Zagreb throughout the year 2015.
- Connecting Cities Conference at Ars Electronica, Linz in September 2015

CALL FOR PROPOSAL / PROCEDURE

Selection of the artists' works

Artists should justify why the project needs to be displayed in urban screens in the urban space, instead of mobile apps, although mobile application can be an extended format to the digital large screens.

Selection results

During the Curators Workshop, Aarhus in November 2014 the artist proposals will be discussed.

The selection will be published in December 2014.

Curators of the Connecting Cities Network (CCN) for 2015

Susa Pop (Initiator of CCN, Public Art Lab, Berlin), Mike Stubbs (FACT, Liverpool), Christopher Lindinger (Ars Electronica, Linz), Yves Bernard (iMAL, Brussels), Céline Jouenne (Videospread, Marseille), Nerea Calvillo (Medialab-Prado), Minna Tarkka (m-cult, Helsinki), Gernot Tscherteu (Media Architecture Institute, Vienna), Darko Fritz (MSU Zagreb), Alain Mongeau (MUTEK, Montreal), Martin Brynskov (University of Aarhus), Marilia Pasculi (Verve Cultural, Sao Paulo), Pascal Lefebvre (Quartier des spectacles, Montreal)

FEE AND PRODUCTION BUDGET

Artist Fee: 1.500 €

Production Cost: 3.000€

Per selected artists' project (not per artist)

More information

See below or go to www.connectingcities.net for more information about the Connecting Cities Network. We advise you to have a look at the artworks that were selected for Networked City 2013 and Participatory City 2014. You can find more information about the urban media facades and venues of the Connecting Cities Events at www.connectingcities.net/infrastructure. If you have any further questions, please send an email to contact@connectingcities.net

ABOUT THE CONNECTING CITIES NETWORK

The Connecting Cities Network (CCN) is initiated by Public Art Lab Berlin and involves 22 international partners in 20 cities:

Aarhus - Aarhus University

Berlin - Public Art Lab

Brussels - iMAL

Dessau - Foundation Bauhaus Dessau

Helsinki - m-cult

Istanbul - Amber Platform

Linz - Ars Electronica

Liverpool - FACT

Madrid - Medialab-Prado

Marseille - Videospread, Marseille-Provence 2013

Melbourne - Federation Square

Montreal - MUTEK, Quartier des Spectacles

Riga - Riga 2014

Sao Paulo - Verve Cultural

Sapporo - Media Arts Lab

Sydney - The Concourse
Vienna - Media Architecture Institute
Wuhan - 403 International Arts Center
Zaragoza - ETOPIA
Zagreb - Museum of Contemporary Art

Streaming Partner: Streampark
Media Partner: Arte Creative

Connecting Cities focuses on networked urban screens as a medium to establish a trans-local infrastructure for the citizens to encounter the public space across a coextensive dimension that connects online and offline layers, local neighbourhoods and cosmopolitan European clusters. As a paradigmatic feature in dynamics of urban corporatisation, big screens and animated surfaces in the public space are an extremely relevant factor in the cultural and social exploration of the city.

We will investigate this creative potential within a 4-years artistic research programme that combines workshops and conferences with the production of artworks and other artistic activities, leading to several Connecting Cities Events. During these events, the participating cities will be connected in an intercultural real-time exchange where a broad public audience can interact with the produced artworks. The Connecting Cities Events follow three curatorial topics that are also of social relevance:

Networked City 2013 opens urban media facades as real-time windows between the cities and connects local neighbourhoods beyond national borders.

Participatory City 2014 engages the citizens in the collaborative creation of their urban environment and encourages them to use urban media facades as a digital stage to directly communicate and debate in the public space.

Visible City 2015 visualises open data generated through sensor and data networks on urban media facades and creates awareness of the environment.

www.connectingcities.net

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