

SWITCH

BY AÏCHA EL BELOU !

HAMBURG 2017

SEE,
WHAT WE FELT
WHEN WE HEARD
WHAT WE NO LONGER SEE...

SWITCH is a project through which I seek exploring, highlighting, and bypassing the relationship citizen/public space. Having noticed that invisibility severely touches organized public spaces (such as in Hamburg), I aim thought-provocation in three steps:

1. **Creating punctual brief emotional connections with passers-by.**
2. **Asking them to express the emotion through virtual space.**
3. **Materializing the collected emotions.**

Starting from a connection with the invisible element in the public space, the process will lead to the creation of an alternative common space where everyone's emotions are openly expressed thanks to virtual exchanges.

Before Hamburg

The project I originally submitted, regardless of the context of the Stamp Festival, was meant to trigger a reflection on the public space in an interactive and playful way in order to highlight one or more of the specificities of this space

During Hamburg

Both through my solitary walks and through the encounters that were offered to me, I could note the following:

- As in most of the developed cities, public space becomes invisible because taken for granted. We (citizens) do not worry about safety, we don't expect surprises, our senses are less and less used. We don't hear, we don't see anymore.
- IT took over communication between people. The information is all in our pockets nowadays.
- Virtual space took over physical space.

Consequential ideas

- Establish a connection between the people and the public space.
- Use communication to make visible again what is not anymore.
- Create an intermediary space between the physical and the virtual one.
- Use the virtual to make the physical visible

And now?

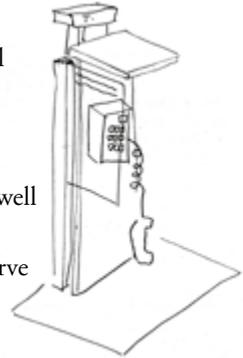
Starting from the original idea (that was to stop in, to interact with and to provoke thoughts about the public space in a subtle way) and what I could take note of during my stay in Altona I suggest the following:

Payphones!

- There are eight of them in the path of the Festival
- Why are they still there?
- Do people still use them?
- Do we see them?

They are there, standing, all the time, invisible, well maintained but obsolete, outdated, non existent...

What about making them visible again, they will serve as a pretext to re establish the connection between physical and visual space through the citizen. He/she becomes a link, a bridge, an intermediary space.



Suggested steps

During the festival:

- Caught passers-by's attention, establish a connection
- Make them hear that this payphone, that used to be an emotion carrier is now invisible and unused.
- Ask them if the payphone reminds them of an emotion, a memory, or a moment and if so ask them to write it down, draw it, or record it.
- Suggest using their cell phones to send the transcribed emotion to the email address displayed in the payphone.

After the festival:

- Use the collected material to materialize the ephemeral connection (publication)
- Share it with all the participants (through their email addresses we already have)

I am a Moroccan, Casablanca-based illustrator, creative director, and graphic designer. Trained as an Architect, I made the city and public spaces my obsession and playground juggling amongst representation, interpretation and appropriation of the unseen and the unsaid through different mediums.



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