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21.05.2006  
Sofia

Artists

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## Statement

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Sofia Through Emotions

Just as the Motion Studios will traverse the different Balkan cities, so do we all have our individual daily trajectories. In our journeys, we often cease to see our city, it becomes a backdrop and a passive observer for a myriad of emotions. Yet, these emotions don't disappear - rather, they remain engraved in each of our mental pictures of the city like graffiti on its walls. And so it turns out that this particular corner carries the smell of her hair, while this small grey balcony has forever captured the sound of the lovers' whistle signal. Far from the predictable everyday routes dominated by functionality and our rational actions and pragmatic choices, our memory contains a dense map of an emotionally charged city. These maps are not disconnected from the official historical and geographic maps that are available for purchase. In fact, a lot of the situations we participate in are informed by the perceived value of these public spaces as national monuments or landmarks.

Places that hold a special interest for us because of their importance in forming our national identity seem to invite us to personalize them by creating our own stories in connection to them.

Sofia has gone through 15 years of rapid change on every level - from the redistribution of nationalized housing, through the change in the character of different neighborhoods, infrastructure developments (the arrival of the subway and the rapid multiplication of cars), and enormous economic differentiation. The neighborhoods are becoming more and more visually different and businesses are disappearing and/or moving constantly. And while the city has gone through this rapid transformation, our minds have in many cases become the only repositories left holding this range of quickly disappearing history.

We are curious to investigate, document and present visually and interactively a collection of obscure Sofias, and thus to preserve in a virtual environment a collective urban experience. We propose to develop an online-residing series of personal city maps, based on initial interviews with 75-100 people. We intend to selectively target this initial group of people from different social, cultural and age groups in order to build our framework of data, but will leave the project live online



to be constantly and continually in development.

For 1 hour every day we will conduct interviews in the Live Studio with passers-by and ask them to describe their different city trajectories - sentimental trips, romantic areas, solitary routes and entertainment spots. They will also be able to rate places selected by previously interviewed people, thus voting for the places appearing on each of these maps.

We have four separate options for viewing:

- 1) Viewing the personal routes around the city for individual people.
- 2) Collective view of the city which identifies the 5 most voted for spots in each category
- 3) Collective view of each of these 4 emotional states of perceiving the city (sentimental, romantic, solitary, entertaining)
- 4) Detailed stories, images and video/audio for each of the spots.

In this way we hope our site will become a portrait of life in the city which holds collective memories and will start a discourse on our everyday experiences. Our project will also serve as a resource for both visitors and natives of Sofia, by offering information and suggestions.

The application and maps will be constantly worked on and will reside both online and be presented on screens at the Editorial booth. We hope to provide enough exposure to rouse the curiosity of our fellow urban dwellers in participating - the success of the project depends in large part in the number of participants outside of our initial number of interviewees.

## CV

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