

Parallel Cities brings ideas to develop into local experience



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Hotel rooms, shopping centres, factories... these are functional places, not usually thought of as interesting to the outside eye. But without them life in the city would be uninhabitable. Their ubiquitous, parallel existences the world over mean these places are instantly recognizable, each modelled on similar rules but displaying a local face. For "CiudadesParalelas / Parallel Cities", Lola Arias and Stefan Kaegi have invited several

artists, Ant Hampton, Christian Garcia, Mariano Pensotti, Gerardo Nauman, Ligna and Dominic Huber, to devise interventions into these kinds of spaces. Six artists have each chosen a location in the city as observation stations for urban phenomena. Some of them chose to work with radio receivers or headphones, others with a choir or with people in their workspace. The pieces vary in form: One can listen to some of them, others you can read or touch. Some are for one, others for a hundred spectators. Some of the performers are singers, others writers, passers-by or even the audience themselves.

After being presented in Berlin, Warsaw, Buenos Aires and Zurich, this unique project will be presented in Kolkata from 10 to 21 December 2012. This unique art project, is being organized under the aegis of "Germany and India 2011-2012: Infinite Opportunities", a sixteen-month programme series celebrating 60 years of diplomatic relations between India and Germany. ■



Stefan Kaegi

Parallel cities is a touring festival

The Parallel Cities Projection is a film presentation. Does it arouse hopes of parallel development of these cities? Does the effort take into account the diversity of the cities which cuts across the parallel theme?

What you saw is just a documentary about a project that has taken place in some cities so far and will take place in December in a very Bengali version in Kolkata and in January in a very Hindi version in Delhi. Parallel cities is a touring festival. But instead of touring big stage designs or ensembles of western actors to the cities spending a lot of money on flights and hotels we bring ideas to the city and the artists will develop them into very local experiences - they will work with Hindi and Bengali authors in metro stations, research biographies of cleaning staff in Indian hotels and they will invite the audience to dance in the middle of India's biggest shopping malls to a music that only they hear - like a time-based flash mob... Cities do develop parallelly and they try to learn from each other as does this project. But the video projection shown in Max Mueller Bhavan also shows the differences that remain.

— As told to BE's Abhijit Ganguly