

Sensory walk

Description

In this exercise, participants will explore the public space from a sensory and embodied perspective, allowing the exploration of public space guided by our senses. It gives space and time to these experiences and to discuss them together as we go. This method brings awareness to our bodily capacities, to the process of walking and what happens in between the places. It acts as a reminder of how every journey and experience is unique.

This exercise aims to enable new connections with the city and to reflect on how we interact in different ways with public space, the way we walk and feel in it, how social dynamics are affected by the eyesight, hearing, touch and smell. It also offers the opportunity to rediscover ourselves, enhancing our perception and our awareness of the colonial nuances present (in different forms) in our daily life, space, social dynamics and the non-human agents involved in it: trees, plants, rivers, water fountains, animals and so on.

Guiding questions

- What kind of traces do you leave when you walk through the city?
- What languages and sounds do you hear and where do you hear them?
- Who walks the different areas and neighborhoods of Zurich?
- How are you perceived and how do you perceive others?
- How do you interact with other people? In what situations and how?
- What is missing in everyday interactions in the city, drawing from your experiences in other countries or from other cultural background?
- How do you interact with nature and non-human subjects such as trees, plants, rivers, fountains and animals?

Materials

- Things to cover the eyes and ears.
- Color paper notes and markers.
- Chalks of different colors (to write on the pavement).
- Water and food to share during the walk. Don't forget sun protection!



*Don't forget to document the different steps of the walk and if the group agrees, maybe even record the conversations. You might find interesting insights when seeing or listening later on.

Instructions

- 1.** Define a route not too long or too busy to walk. Please consider that some of the participants will be blindfolded and/or are barefoot. It should be an area that doesn't expose them to harm or injuries.
- 2.** Divide the group in pairs. Choose to restrict or privilege one or more senses. One should always take care and guide the other if blindfolded or barefoot.
- 3.** Amplify the senses you are left with: What do you hear, feel, smell and how does it affect you? Take into consideration your own body and corporeality while walking this route. You can already talk about it with your partner if you wish or immerse yourself in the exercise completely.
- 4.** At the end of the route, preferably in a space where you feel comfortable staying for a while, share your impressions of the walk with others and discuss the guiding questions together.

References

Plotegher, Paolo/ Zechner, Manuela/ Rübner Hansen, Bue (ed.): Nanopolitics handbook by the nanopolitics group, 2013.

BOZAR Lab and Christiana Kazakou: Sensory Walks: Learning by Walking, Thinking by Experiencing. When Art meets Science.

