



## Signs of the City – Metropolis Speaking

Barcelona ::::: Berlin ::::: London ::::: Sofia

Research – Exhibition – Youth Art – Conference

**Urban Research on Resemblance and Diversity**

**in four European Metropolises**

### **SYNOPSIS**

Employing digital photography and new media, **Signs of the City – Metropolis Speaking** will explore the sign systems of the European city by drawing up a visual inventory of four selected metropolises. London as centre of Europe's biggest conurbation with its multicultural flair. Barcelona as current most prospering city in Western Europe, in permanent strain between Catalan autonomy and Spanish state structure. And Berlin, a city that had to reinvent itself after the Fall of the Wall in 1989. The fourth city is one of the youngest members of the European Community, Bulgaria's capital: Sofia. Thus we expand the context of visual research to Eastern Europe as well.

During an envisaged two-year cooperation framework, professional artists will work with young people in Berlin, London, Sofia and Barcelona to generate an inventive online image database: a contemporary archive providing free access, interaction and usage.

Young people, guided by professional artists, will explore the signs of their cities and document their urban life at the same time. Camera mobile phones and digital cameras will be employed to map and organise the discovered elements – signs, symbols, signifying facets – in a visual inventory. All results will be published immediately on the Internet archive. This phase of research will take place in approximately 35 workshops in all participating cities over a period of ten months – from October 2007 to July 2008. From a large exchange programme of all participants and artists, a valuable exchange of artistic-methodical approaches and local-specific premises evolves.

During the concluding presentation phase of the project in autumn 2008, several exhibitions in the participating cities will be curated. Thanks to specific cooperation with the cities' public transport companies, these presentations will take place in public (transport) space, in order to emphasise the results of the artistic research. Furthermore, renowned Institutes of Contemporary Arts in each city – **Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin**, **the Centre for Contemporary Culture Barcelona**, **Watermans London** and **the House of Cinema in Sofia** – will be implicated and integrated in this exhibition phase.

A conference about the "Signs of the European City" and the intercultural dialogue will be discussed in late autumn 2008 at the **Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin**. The evaluation will be conducted coordinated and overseen by the **Centre for Urban and Community Research at Goldsmiths College**.

The individual project elements of **Signs of the City – Metropolis Speaking** create in their interplay a border-crossing Gesamtkunstwerk, a complete work of art linking and engaging renowned contemporary arts institutions, media training centres, youth art and leisure organisations and one of the world's leading academic institutes for social research. With the innovative possibilities of data processing, the four cities will be visually and virtually interwoven. This networking occurs by way of an artistic exploration of the pictorial and symbolic codes of contemporary urban landscapes, creating a hitherto un(fo)reseen image of the **European City**.