

Archive-Travel: dream.program.onboard

by Christine Mello

Travelling is probably one of the most well-known ways to undertake displacements and to exchange experiences. In travelling, we inevitably find the loss of organised routine, the dissolution of a habit. Even if the trip becomes a touristic cliché and loses its meaning, it can also qualify as an open process, of indeterminate nature. But how to observe the existence of travels in which the repetition of patterns implies in cancelling out any possible estrangement?

Denise Agassi brings us strange and formless ways of travelling in the performatic Archive-Travel: through the deconstruction of travel files that circulate in the internet (in platforms such as Flickr, Youtube, Freesound, Blogspot, among others). In order to do so, indexing, tagging and search systems operate a singular way to produce walkabouts, access people, distant places and cardinal points.

The piece seeks to change the perception of what is to travel nowadays. Constituted as a transmedia platform, it articulates routes between the spaces of the virtual, the global and the online (where one lives the dimension of the file) and the spaces of the physical, the local, the off-line (in which one lives the experience of geolocalisation). In the piece, similarities and differences in the search results – among words, photographic files, videos, sounds, text and geographical directions – unveil planes of discursivity and indetermination in the social networks.

The artist integrates contemporary experience with net art. A kind of practice shared in real time, which traverses many codes, affects and cultures. In it, the strength of the piece implies random connections, the involvement of communities, the substitution of the notion of individual subject by a collective subject and consequently the dissolution of traditional authorship. It implies a public dimension of travelling.

The travels proposed by Denise Agassi through the networked files make us aware of the constant demand for recording and for online publishing that assail us today. We realise how much travelling means to recreate an internal logic of a collective dream in which is difficult to tell apart actors and observers, where we program common paths, we are networked, synchronised.

We find here visualisations of a cannibal travel, chiefly resulting from the accumulation of images and the overlapping of experiences with *the other*, in which we have access to one collective imaginary, to a polyphony. There are also traces, remembrances and souvenirs as strategies to fix memories. Guided by the principles given by new ways of appropriation and processing databases, the artist brings about fresh issues to travelling in the hybrid displacements of the net, placing them in contrast to, in the 2010's, an ephemeral present of dystopic character.

The more condensed are the geographic directions and the contents, the more acute and strange is the contact. In this sense, the piece transforms the entropic, saturated, banal and disposable nature of the files now circulating in the internet into an intense exchange of experiences, into a true travel. In this creative game, the piece constitutes a texture, a palimpsest, under the guise of a boarding platform.

In Denise Agassi, to travel is to articulate with the chaos of the net. For her, the files are exercises in the production of difference. The subject finds itself estranged within them. It is not the issue of extolling the kitsch element, often present, but instead of

exploring ways of life, the disorganisations of habit, of the errands and of narrative associations that the archive-travel brings on.