ABOUT: Psychogeographie - Neue Typographie

Psychogeographie — Neue Typographie is an image series showcasing various pieces of type found in Berlin, comprising typical metropolitan structures such as Signage, Transport, Building Materials, Posters etc.

Title:

The title of the publication 'Psychogeographie — Neue Typographie' is the German translation of 'Psychogeography — New Typography'. This best summarises the experience of the whole process, using psychogeographic ideas as a tool to navigate the often unnoticed typographic aspects of our urban environment, highlighting the role typography plays both functionally and aesthetically in our modern world.

Relevant Terminology:

Psychogeography:

Psychogeography is defined as the 'exploration of urban environments that emphasises interpersonal connections to places and arbitrary routes.' It was in-part inspired by the nineteenth-century French term 'flaneur', a word used to describe an affluent, urban-dwelling man, who possessed the 'ability to wander detached from society, for an entertainment from the observation of the urban life'.

One of the key theories involved in psychogeography is the theory of the 'dérive', a dérive is described as 'an unplanned journey through a landscape, usually urban, in which participants stop focusing on their everyday relations to their social environment.' The term was popularised by the Letterist International, and most famously explored by philosopher Guy Debord in "Theory of the Dérive" (1956). It was then used as an important tool by the Situationist International, a group of political theorists and avant-garde artists that adopted this idea to combat the boredom facilitated by the modernised urban environments that were growing around them.

Typography:

Typography simply refers to the 'art and technique of arranging type to make written language legible, readable and appealing when displayed.'

NOTES: Psychogeographie - Neue Typographie

Notes on Context:

I find typography is always more apparent in places where it doesn't make sense to us. Our day-to-day lives are filled with communicative design on signage, transport, packaging, adverts, amongst the swathe of other branded structures found in most modern metropolitan landscapes. Our accommodation of design as well as the quantity of which it exists in the modern world, to which we have become accustomed, means over time it loses its attraction and loses our attention. We often see through the design choices in which information is displayed to us, through its colours, its form, its material and its type, it becomes almost transparent, seamless within its environment. We digest these aspects subconsciously, with little attention to the finer details of how the information has been specifically laid out for us, whether it be on a music event poster, a shopfront or a street sign. Within our daily lives, we become used to navigating the same landscapes, seeing the same signs, the same shops, the same adverts and much of this repetitive visual noise blends together into a forgetful haze of information.

The environments that we so consistently spend our time in, despite their familiarity, can eventually become feature-less. Utilising the same routes for the same purposes, exposed to the same streets, parks and facades for a prolonged period of time, we stop seeing, we stop looking at the things around us as isolated structures and more as a collection of emotions tied to previous experiences. In these environments we have all of our routes mapped efficiently in our heads, never straying away from the comfort of this familiarity. We never take time to notice things we haven't noticed before, often traversing these landscapes guided by our phones with music muffling the sounds of our environment.

By changing our environment we can alter this state of mind, the unfamiliarity causes us to reconnect with our surroundings and by allowing ourselves to explore new environments freely with no guide or predetermined route, we invite new experiences not permitted by our previous way of existing. It is only when you allow yourself to explore in this way that you can uncover the smaller details of our urban landscapes, previously smothered by the visual noise. The amount of our immediate world that remains unseen, due to convenience and efficiency is far greater than you would think, and although undertaking a process such as a dérive requires patience, it is ultimately therapeutic, physically and emotionally.

This experience can be exaggerated in environments outside the country you live in, due to the variations in architecture, culture and lifestyle. It is in these 'foreign' landscapes that finer urban details such as typography are more readily noticed, caused by the unfamiliarity of language we either don't understand or are not used to seeing. When we see words in a language different to our usual expectation their physical form becomes far more apparent, some languages may share familiarity through their origin and alphabet, but when the arrangement of these letters and words do not make sense to us, we are forced to look at the words as individual structures consisting of basic shapes and lines.

Notes on Process:

The process was relatively simple, this was important as it meant the experience felt as natural as possible, there was little to no forward planning, outside of what time I would aim to start the dérive. It started at an apartment in the Samariter Quarter (Friedrichshain), carrying only a compact digital camera and my phone (in case of emergencies). From this point I would begin freely choosing which way I wanted to go from there, with no time limit or directions set. I had been in Berlin two days at the point of conducting the dérive, so there would be some places I slightly recognised, but I accepted that this couldn't be helped.

The main goal was just to explore Berlin, I tried to go in with as few preconceived outcomes as possible, and allow the journey to take its course naturally. The only fixed idea in mind was to photograph any type-containing things that I liked during the dérive, with no constraint on type of object or an amount of images I would like to end up with. The following details a brief summary of the experience after completing it.

'After leaving the apartment at the start of the dérive I ended up doing a few circles of blocks in the area I started in, before dead-ends pushed me out onto the main roads going into central Berlin. I began following the U-Bahn route down from Frankfurter Tor to Weberwiese which ran only about 10m below where I was walking at street level. I then worked my way down towards the East Side Gallery, skirting around Berghain before doing a loop back on myself and headed towards, and across, the Spree via Schillingbrücke. Once across I walked down past Baumhaus an der Mauer, Mariannenplatz and Engelbecken Park. From here I can't remember exactly where I walked but I ended up at a Netto Supermarket (Bergmannstraße 5, 10965 Berlin, Germany). The dérive came to an end around this time, after walking slightly further down this street, this left me with around 100 images, which wasn't planned, but was enough to sift through and find some of the best ones.'

PSYCHOGEOGRAPHIE – NEUE TYPOGRAPHIE





















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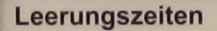
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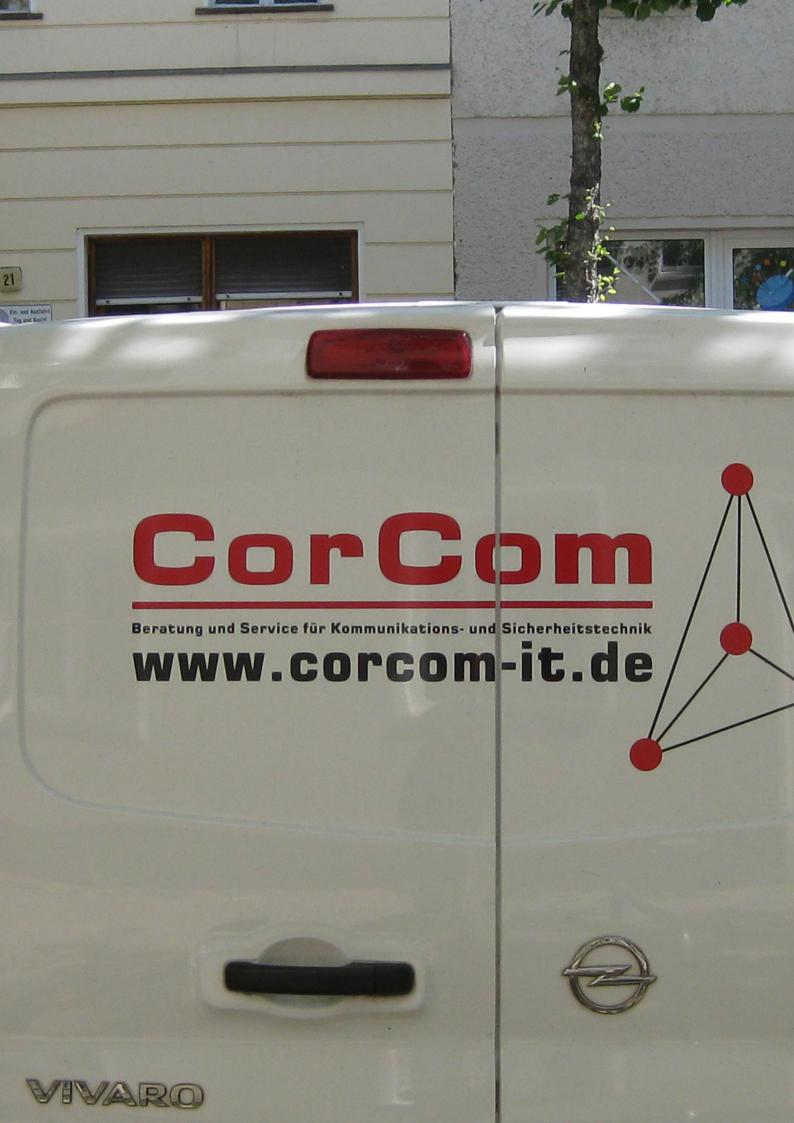
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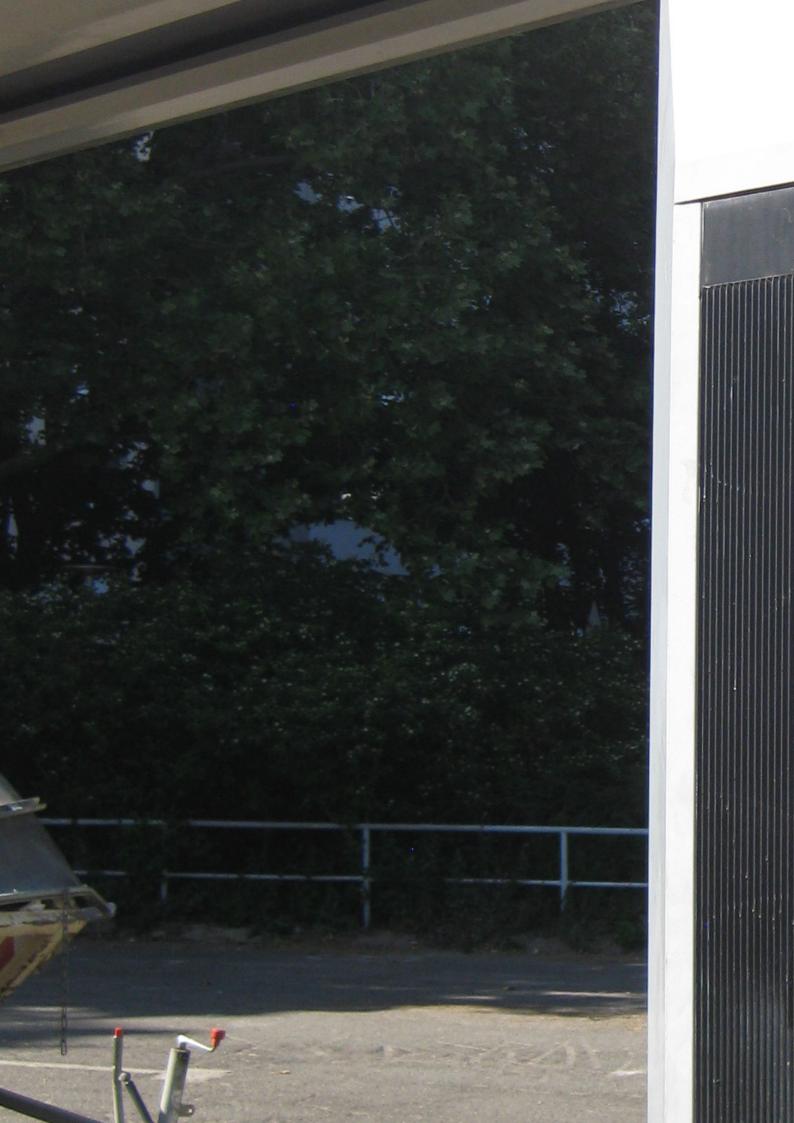




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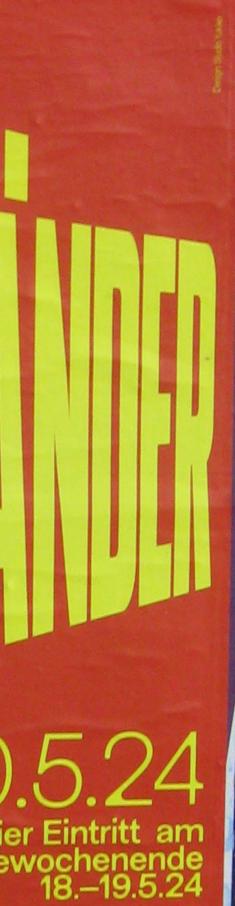
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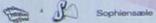






























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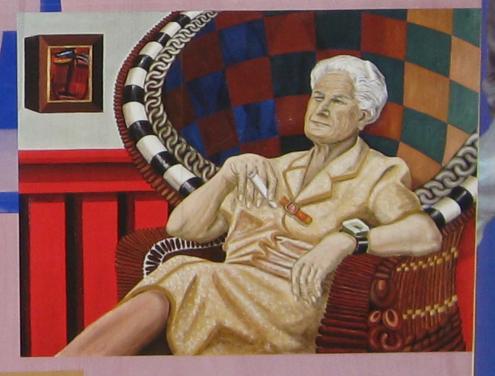
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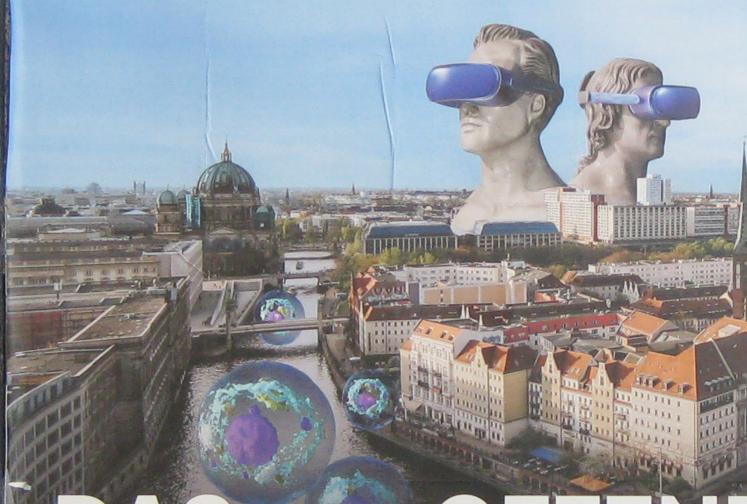








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