

Sensitization of Cultural Legacy in the Big City: Grand Bukashka and Story Bus (Moscow And Krasnoyarsk)

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Abstract

The report examines the experience of the development and implementation of socio-urbanistic projects "Grand Bukashka" (Moscow, Russia) and "Storybus" (Krasnoyarsk, Russia) as the events that combine elements of lectures and art event with multimedia support in the form of a ride using the actual language of communication on the move. This innovative format of mass event is attractive to both young and adult educated citizens and forms the cultural code of the city. The events were designed for the general public: we used a famous Moscow trolley bus (25 free rides) and the longest Krasnoyarsk bus route (4 days, 60 minutes, more than 100 times a day).

The tours featured a collection of pre-recorded audio tracks for each stop based on scientific research in the field of history, arts, musicology.

The aim beyond this solution is sensitization with regard to the cultural heritage, space-guidance, urban activism, participation in the cultural evolution of the city. We strive to bring back the memory of the place. The principles of project creation and content aspect are discussed: development of themes, selection of speakers (historians, architects, etc.), interviews treatment, itinerary. The project team defines the emotional aspects of city perception to make the participants feel together with think. It is a synthesis of art (music – light – words) emotional tension around architectural objects.

Keywords: youth event, education, megapolis.

1. Background

This study focuses on the analysis of the innovative format of mass events in the metropolis: a ride with multimedia support with comments of historical and cultural content and with musical accompaniment. This article discusses the socio-psychological basis of sensitization, in other words: how to open the city to its inhabitants, how to make it attractive for newcomers and to the younger generation, how to unveil to them cultural history and practices of a big city breaking into and adding new intellectual and emotional dimension to the daily commute. One of the co-authors of this paper, S. Nikitin, is the author of these historical-cultural initiatives, the founder and leader of the project.

The analysed projects can contribute to a perception of the city as a code to decipher (S. Hall [1]), which are personally meaningful symbols (P. Bourdieu [2]). The intention of the project, its mission is to generate cultural code of big cities, to valorize its values, to make young intellectuals participate in cultural urban evolution. The concept of code has been interpreted by A.R. Usmanova [3, p. 364] in three ways: (1) as a sign structure; (2) as rules of combination, symbols ordering or as a way of structuring; (3) as an occasional mutual correspondence of each symbol to a single signifier.

Based on these positions, we define the urban cultural code as a set of behavioural systems, including speech formulas, cultural tastes and preferences, appearance, place of staying - all this indicates the individual's place in the society, a social rank and affiliation to a community.

2. Methods and materials

This work is carried out in various forms since 1998 [4; 5]. The present study will illustrate the positions of the conception on two different examples:

1) a trolleybus tour in Moscow along the route B (known affectionately to generations of Muscovites as the "Bukashka" or little bug);

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Figure 1. Logos and photos of Story bus project

2) the project “Storybus” in Krasnoyarsk along the longest route of the city, the bus № 90 (50 stops = 50 stories about the city),



Figure 1. Logos and photos of Bukashka project

Let's consider the elements of this format:

- a) intellectuality of the audience (speakers are turning to a prepared audience talking about their researches or practices);
- b) aesthetics (architectural monuments, music, landscape, clothing of the participants);
- c) the opportunity to meet peers, make new friends, to enter into a new circle;
- d) to become involved in the big event; e) excellent choice of music;
- f) free for participants (although the project cost itself);
- g) participation of volunteers; participation of urban services; participation of private capital; participation of the city administration; h) participating of the best available media;
- i) a website permitting to get ready to the event, read the recommended books, ask questions.

3. Results

Long before the beginning of the joint work, the idea and the image are chosen and discussed by the authors of the present paper.

The authors agree with the position of Peter Eisenman [7], which he outlined in a speech about the project of a new architectural complex in Santiago de Compostela: an image of pilgrims converging on thousands of roads and paths to the relics of St. James has been the basis of the image, both external and internal design of the project. Based on this, we select a special theme, an event, date, person emblematic for the chosen place and the year.

Points of space orientation are allocated to which all pulled together; the items of culture of different times are chosen to be valorised. The team understands its mission to change the regular conception of city guides and to add fresh pages to the city history.

The selection of musical items is one of the key elements in building the event.



Regularly a special soundtrack is commissioned, but the route is also illustrated by existing music – basing on the idea of the conformity of the mood to the historical significance of the place. In an audio-guided journey through Moscow's musical past, we told and show the history of the city through its music, from medieval minstrels to present day rave.

The musical project "Bukashka" was dedicated to the 50th anniversary of Melodia, the legendary Russian record company whose archives have provided much of the sounds that we were playing that day. Note the special words attracting the attention of a listener to the city code elements. For instance:

"To the left you'll see a large mid-20th century grey building of the mid-20th century with a branch of Sberbank on the ground floor – number 14/16. Locals call it Chkalov's house, after the legendary 1930s test pilot Valery Chkalov who flew from Moscow to Vancouver over the North Pole. But the house has a musical connection too – it was the home of David Oistrakh, a great violinist and friend of Dmitri Shostakovich. Sergei Prokofiev also lived here after his return to Russia in 1936. He composed his ballets "Romeo and Juliet" and "Cinderella" here. Let's hear a fragment from Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet". Listen how the music echoes the monumental grandeur of the 1930s buildings of the Garden Ring: Sergei Prokofiev. Montagues and Capulets (from "Romeo and Juliet" ballet);

The same place can have two (but not more) connotations in the text, for instance:

"Kudrinskaya Square, a two-storied yellow house with columns and an inscription in gold letters "Tchaikovsky Cultural Center". Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky lived here for some few months as a young man while he wrote his Second Symphony, earning his daily bread by journalism. And on the right it is one of the Stalin-era skyscrapers that Muscovites call the Seven Sisters. The classic Soviet film "Moscow does not believe in tears" was filmed here – it won an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 1980. The title song is dedicated to the Garden Ring and was composed by three of the USSR's finest bards: Dmitry Sukharev, Yuri Vizbor and Sergei Nikitin". Let's listen";

Russian music of old time is ignored, but as we passed the place where legendary film director Andrei Tarkovsky was born we let the participants listen to a Song of Skomorokh from his film "Andrei Rublev", a stunning portrayal of a medieval itinerant musician and fearless buffoon.

In the middle of the tour we proposed to take a 40-minute walking tour of the streets around Triumfalnaya Square by small groups guided each by a S.Nikitin's student of Moscow's Higher School of Economics.

Participants saw, among other things, the building where fifty years ago Gennady Shpalikov wrote his poem "I Step Through Moscow." The cinematic adaptation by Georgy Danelia became one of the most popular Soviet films ever made. The commentary is formal: "Every Muscovite knows Andrei Petrov's title song for the film by heart". Of course, it is a suggestion to those who don't.

We cannot embrace all phenomena of a big city life, but we can give the opportunity to experience intellectual emotions, to give knowledge about the city, which is normally transmitted only to the initiated, to connect the place with the world history.

For example, in Krasnoyarsk:

"The Nicholas Settlement made up of several areas with expressive names: Nakhlovka ("Rascal Side"), Terebilovka ("Cutpurse Side"), Tarakanovka ("Cockroach Side") stretches down to the Yenisei river. At one time, believe it or not, this was an elite summer resort.

This was where the merchant and traveller Gennady Yudin had his mansion, with its library of 81 thousand books. When Yudin's son, who was a booklover like his father, died unexpectedly, Yudin could no longer bear the sight of the books; he sold them to Washington, and his collection became the basis for the Slavonic Section of the famous United States Library of Congress of the United States. But there is some good news: firstly,

Yudin did not give up book-collecting forever, he took it up again and now, as many of us know, Regional Scientific Library bears his name. Secondly, forty years ago, some of the books were returned to Krasnoyarsk from America.

You can go to Karl Marx Street building of the Library and have a look through them.

The last piece of news is even better: Yudin's mansion is restored in 2014 and is a museum".

Post-Realization stage: At the final stage the team performs an educational work with young creative people working with us for a one and only project

4. Conclusions

The events were designed for the general public: we used a famous Moscow trolley bus (25 free rides) and the longest Krasnoyarsk bus route (4 days, 60 minutes, more than 100 times a day).

The tours featured a collection of pre-recorded audio tracks for each stop based on scientific research in the field of history, arts, musicology.



Both projects were also published as mobile apps and are freely distributed for iOS and Android smartphones with Russian and English subtitles. Anyone can do this ride using the same route on the bus or alternatively on foot or by bike, or just listen to stories [8; 9].

At the subsequent discussion, the team is involved in a joint analysis and introspection, organizing the experience of success and encouraging the participants to the joint experience of the event, to the feeling of "aftertaste" and anticipation to participate in the next event. Grand Bukashka & StoryBus inspired similar initiatives on the public transports in Vologda (2014) and in Krasnoyarsk (2015, 2017); authors were also commissioned to design similar events for Kazan (2016) and Rome (2017). We should add that exactly one year after we launched StoryBus, the 7th of December 2016, the City of Krasnoyarsk unveiled a monument to Alexander Stepanov, the first governor of the Region of Yenissey [9; 10].

All this creates an inner acceptance of the city, its spiritual life, loving attitude to the environment.

Summing up, the functions of the project are the following: socializing, educational, aesthetic, sensitizing, inspirational, ludic. This is an opportunity of exploration and education in an entertainment event in a very unusual place which is in the same time ordinary, affecting the sensory realm. It is a development of relations between the people in the big city. The innovative status of this mass event was defined by the choosing the media: the public transport route that has its daily commuters. In the same time, the PR-campaign has brought young and adult educated audience.

In their responses after the events the participants stress that they feel their city deeper, they make the general cultural conclusions ("all the way some incredible sense of unity was present, indissoluble connection of urban environment", according to one of the participants). They understand the need for cultural evolution, modernization of the urban environment.

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