



CALL for CITYMAKERS Virtual Walks Projects 2020

Hello CITYMAKERS community and beyond!

In these times of the pandemic, outdoor **urban walking is becoming the movement and activity “of the hour”**: not only as a way of keeping physically fit and interacting with others while respecting social distancing regulations, but also as a **chance to rethink and reflect on places** while all senses are being engaged, to intentionally change perspectives and **look beyond the obvious**, and to explore the “edges” of the system.

Outdoor urban walking is an opportunity not only to ask what the immediate impact of the coronavirus pandemic on urban and social space is, but also **more substantially: What dysfunctions, blind spots and paradoxes does it bring to the surface?** For example, why do so-called “livable cities” provide more public space for cars than for people to walk, for plants to grow and for animals to enrich biodiversity? As much as COVID-19 regulations are restricting the use of urban space for people, what is the creative potential that this moment in time holds to reclaim public spaces and streets for people not only to walk more safely but also to live more sustainable and diverse lives?

The conscious act of walking is not new. And it is controversial. Walking and *flânerie* (French: act of strolling) were the subjects of 20th and 21st-century writers, such as Baudelaire, Balzac and Zola in France, and Franz Hessel in Germany in his book *Spazieren in Berlin*. The Swiss sociologist Lucius Burckhardt labeled it the “science of strollology.” Walking was seen as liberating, the exercise of freedom outside the production system. In the past “flâneurs” who described our modern cities did so mainly from a white male perspective. **Now is the time to change perspectives.** As Lauren Elkin, Paris-based author of *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City*, would put it: „The city is our necessity, it is like a nutrient, it drives us.”

Walking is also a bottom-up cultural activity in a grassroots context, as for example with the CITYMAKERS Wuhan project partner CECP – China Endangered Culture Protectors, who created Wuhan Heritage Walks. Further examples include many European cultural walking practices and research platforms.

These are some of the reasons we want to invite you to walk with us within the frame of our CITYMAKERS Virtual Walks Project 2020!

CITYMAKERS walks projects are investigations of and in urban space, with a focus on “livable cities” themes.

The walks **investigate fundamental themes of life in cities** that are as relevant for people living in China as for those living in Berlin or any other European city. **Lines of inquiry could, for example, include:** How has the corona pandemic changed urban and social spaces? What are space-making responses by the government or residents in your city? Regarding cities and nature: What projects and strategies are there for reconnecting with nature? In terms of industrial cultural heritage: How has this been revitalized and become part of the culture of your city? Concerning public space and equality: What power dynamics and individual privileges would you like to bring to light in your surroundings? More generally: How do you perceive the quality of daily life in your neighborhood? What makes it a livable or not-so-livable place for you personally? Or specifically in a Europe-China context: What evidence of European-Chinese relations can you find in your city? Last but not least, in light of the killing of George Floyd and the current focus on anti-racism work, you might also investigate: What anti-racism networks and initiatives would you like to introduce? Beyond that: **Introduce your own creative ideas and vision of a livable city, village or community! Be courageous: We wish to offer a place especially to those who feel their voices are not heard enough. Don't be shy! Reach out!**

The **notion of “walk”** could be interpreted and extended differently for each walk project: Some walks might literally include a lot of walking and focus on a certain track, while others may involve spending more time at a few select places. Walks should be critical, creative and informative for the community.

- CITYMAKERS Virtual Walks are **aimed at a Sino-international community** of changemakers, citymakers, researchers and actors from all walks of life.
- Selected walk projects will be shown on **September 19th at a CITYMAKERS VIRTUAL WALKS NIGHT** as part of the celebration weekend marking the 5th anniversary of CITYMAKERS.
- If carried out in real time, walks should last 1 to 2 hours. The length of a virtual/ video walk should be around 15 minutes. Equipment required for the virtual walk (e.g. camera, audio recorder, external microphone, gimbal, computer) cannot be provided by CITYMAKERS.

- The Virtual Walks language is English; bilingual English-Chinese contributions are welcome.
- Walks should include some form of Sino-European dialogue. This can take shape in various ways, such as working in tandem with a Chinese and a European partner, referencing related experiences or incorporating material from China or Europe. We particularly welcome contributions from individuals with a migratory background and life experience in China AND Europe!

Virtual walks can vary in style. Different options are possible:

- **Artistic format:** Please have a look at the first of the CITYMAKERS Virtual Walks series with Popo Fan on Queer Asian Community Life in Berlin Neukölln, produced in cooperation with Silvan Hagenbrock. [Virtual Cinematic Walk With Popo Fan](#). Contact Silvan to get access to the link: silvan.hagenbrock@c-makers.de
- **Walking dialog format:** Filmmaker [Fred Plassmann](#) leads a walking conversation about architecture and urban space with [Eike Roswag](#). See here: http://wp.offscreen.de/lens_portfolio/architalk-eike-roswag/
- **Documentary format:** CITYMAKERS project partner [Kika Yang](#) co-produced this virtual walk on the basis of a stroll through Berlin Weissensee last year: <https://vimeo.com/423231193>
- CITYMAKERS team members offer virtual walk guidance and consultation: Kika Yang and Silvan Hagenbrock will be available during **consultation time slots** on July 2nd, July 30th and August 20th, always from 3 - 5 PM Berlin local time. Each session will focus on one of the three formats mentioned above. The first 30 minutes will be dedicated to describing the virtual walk production and giving instructions and advice. The rest of the session will remain open to Q&A to support creative teams with the production process. To get a link for a virtual meeting, please send a request to kika.yang@c-makers.de with at least 24 hours' notice.
- If you have an idea for a virtual walk project, please submit a short proposal (1 page max.) by **June 30th** and we will get back to you with feedback! Proposals should be sent to info@c-makers.de
- Virtual Walks winners will be determined by community vote on our online platform during the week following the premiere on Saturday, September 19th. Eight projects will then **receive special AWARDS!**
- Are you passionate about the idea of a virtual walk, but don't have enough resources? In special cases we can offer some financial support. Do reach out to us at info@c-makers.de
- Final Virtual Walks projects should be **submitted by September 3rd**. Please send your submissions to info@c-makers.de

Looking forward to your submission!

Your CITYMAKERS team

About CITYMAKERS

CITYMAKERS China-Europe is a network of inspired people looking for new ways of making cities livable. CITYMAKERS is a program fostering international understanding. In its first five years of funding it has been supported by the Robert Bosch Foundation. The program is implemented by the intermediary actor CONSTELLATIONS, based in Berlin. CITYMAKERS' key question is: How can cities and their actors – despite differing circumstances in China and in Europe – learn, act and innovate together?

For more information see:

c-makers.de
facebook.com/citymakerschinaeurope

Or contact: info@c-makers.de