

# VHILLS PRISMA

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Teaching material for schools

Secondary School

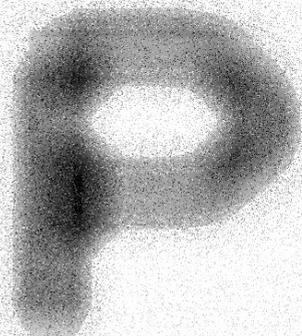
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maat

maat Education and Public Programmes  
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The exhibition *Prisma* by the artist Alexandre Farto, aka Vhils, places us, inside the museum, in confrontation with his usual field of action: the city. Over eight years (pre-pandemic) the artist has been collecting images from nine cities where he has installed his works: Mexico City, Cincinnati, Hong Kong, Lisbon, Los Angeles, Macau, Paris, Beijing, and Shanghai. Internationally renowned for his large-scale interventions in public space, the city has been the stage for many hours of observation and, often, critical positioning.

The narratives he creates from each of these cities are presented as a complex universe of multiple and simultaneous images that confront us with the dissonances of each **metropolis\*** represented here and the global problems that embrace all large cities.

In an invitation to belong to all these territories from an experience of relating to the screen (the one that has most dictated our lives in recent times), we challenge you to also question the experiences that most characterise the notion of city and the similarities and contrasts that the exhibition brings you in relation to your daily life and the way you read your city.

#### CONNECTED SCHOOL SUBJECTS

Environmental Studies, Geography, Sociology, Arts and Crafts, Music, Drama, etc.

#### KEYWORDS

City, Globalisation, Pre-pandemic, Metropolis, Identity, City Centre-Periphery, Citizens

\* Discover all the NEW WORDS at the end.

At the museum

# Me in the City

Based on the logic of the participatory spectator and on the invitation that, through the mirrors, the scenography of the exhibition invites us to become “inhabitants” of the cities represented, take the game of participation to a dimension of playing with the scale of your body in relation to the urban environments captured by the artist Vhils.

In a dynamic game in pairs, one student must create short films with their mobile phone (we suggest 5') and the other student must talk with the shadow of their body superimposed on the video, creating actions in distances that allow them to appear to belong to the documented scene.

(ex: crossing the road, greeting a character in the video, walking side by side with the characters on the screen, interacting with objects that appear in the videos, peeking inside a shop window).



## OBJECTIVES

To explore the performative dimension that the exhibition allows. To place each participant in the role of a possible inhabitant of the different cities presented, in a logic of inter-relationship. Promote a cultural proximity between those who observe and the characters who are observed.



View of the exhibition *Prisma* by Alexandre Farto aka Vhils, maat, 2022. Photo: Pedro Pina.

In class

# Global World

In working groups, investigate characteristics (documented by images) of each of the 9 cities represented in the exhibition: culture, economy, architecture, etc.

After a short presentation by each group, create a debate on the identity of each of these places and find the problems that overlap the distances between the cities and create a homogenous web of what it is like to live in **metropolises**, creating references that bring them together. In the end, question whether experiencing the cities (in the exhibition captured in the pre-pandemic period) continues to reflect the same problems and challenges today.



## OBJECTIVES

To promote the ability to debate current events; to find contrasts or similarities between the pre-pandemic period and today; to be able to understand the city phenomenon beyond its geographical specificities.



View of the exhibition *Prisma* by Alexandre Farto aka Vhils, maat, 2022. Photo: Pedro Pina.

## Conclusion

Living in a city every day, travelling to another urban destination or being confronted with screens that bring us a filter, a view of the other person regarding known or unknown territories leads us to different moments of reflection.

In the exhibition *Prisma*, the artist Alexandre Farto, aka Vhils, confronts us with video documents that helped him characterise different cities and that, now transformed into an artistic installation, allow us to wander through nine cities simultaneously, in a conflict of visual and sound information. The characters presented in slow motion make us think about waiting for a future they don't know about. In everyday life we never have this time to observe and the city escapes us at a hallucinating pace. What changes in our understanding of the global city after this experience?!

## New words

### METROPOLIS

*Metropolis* is a Greek word that comes from *mētēr*, meaning “mother”, and from *pólis*, meaning “city”. It is usually used to refer to large capital cities, as they generate various urban fabrics around them. These are territories that, due to their scale in relation to economic and political power, are larger than most cities.

### GENTRIFICATION

It is a phenomenon that usually affects areas of the city that are not usually considered central and that start to receive housing, commerce and services different from those that originally characterised this area, creating a difficult dialogue between the local population and the new inhabitants of these areas.

### URBANISM

It is a discipline that promotes the design, planning and organisation of cities, as well as studying existing urban characteristics in order to create critical and reflective thinking about cities, so as to enable, in combination with other disciplines, a better quality of life in such territories.

### VOYEURISM

The act of observing others without them knowing that they are being observed. In the context of this exhibition, it is associated with the fact that we are analysing the lives of citizens who are distant in geography and time, in a logic of these citizens not imagining that this moment would take place.

### CACOPHONY

Designation normally used for the creation of some discomfort or confusion caused by the overlapping of sounds / noises and the difficulty of deciphering them.

### GLOBALISATION

It is the process of bringing the various societies and nations around the world closer together, whether economically, socially, culturally, or politically. Especially in the Western world context, it is increasingly used, and also promoted, by the digital age, which has created new models of proximity.



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