



SPATIAL GEOMETRIES: MIRROR LINE

Spatial Geometries: Mirror Line takes artist Francis Alÿs' axiom: "Sometimes, to make something is really to make nothing; and paradoxically, sometimes to make nothing is to make something," as a starting point for an investigation into one of many possible spatial geometries that can be projected onto and experienced in the city. The term 'spatial geometries' refers to a mathematical geometry applied to space, so that the relationship between certain points (in this case twin coffee shops) and lines (both the line that can be drawn between them and their mirror line) are envisioned and then enacted by walking these imaginary relationships within a real, physical space.

As a pit stop on the way to work, a makeshift office, or a catalyst for social activities, the coffee shop in this tour offers a potential site for changing the way we think about the everyday through a subtle transformation in the purpose and intention used to actively engage it. This capacity for transformation springs from what artist and academic Stephen Johnstone calls, "the desire to bring these uneventful and overlooked aspects of lived experience into visibility" by "drawing on the vast reservoir of normally unnoticed, trivial and repetitive actions comprising the common ground of daily life." It makes visible what is already there. But beyond bringing the activity of drinking coffee and the spatial geometry of mirroring to the forefront of your consciousness, this tour also invites you to initiate attentive looking and active involvement in order to continually recalibrate your awareness and relationship with the city.

ITINERARY

(A) Dark Horse Espresso Bar, 682 Queen Street East
 (AB) The centre point between A and B; 160 Jarvis Street
 (B) Dark Horse Espresso Bar, 215 Spadina Avenue

- * The walk from A to B takes approximately 1 hour.
- * You can also walk this tour in reverse.

INSTRUCTIONS for a self-guided tour

Travel to your first destination. Go in. Order a coffee or beverage of your choice. Notice the mugs, the glasses, the person who prepares your drink, the chairs, the tables, the way the sunlight penetrates the space, the time of day, the smells, how people sit and interact with each other, the air on your skin. Form in your mind a space for these observations. Find a way to hold them there – as vividly as you can. Discuss these observations with someone if there is someone to talk to.

After you have satisfactorily taken in or inscribed this space in your mind, continue walking until you have reached the midpoint between your first destination (A) and the designated next place on your journey (B). Stand in the spot that marks the centre of the shortest line between A and B. If you desire, trace with your body the line of reflection by walking the mirror line between the two places you will visit today. Imagine other real and fictional geometries (the relationship between different points, lines and forms in space) that exist within the city.

Continue to your next destination. Go in. Order a coffee or beverage of your choice. Notice the mugs, the glasses, the person who prepares your drink, the chairs, the tables, the way the sunlight penetrates the space, the time of day, the smells, how people sit and interact with each other, the air on your skin. Form in your mind a space for these observations. Find a way to hold them there – as vividly as you can. Discuss these observations with someone if there is someone to talk to, and compare this experience with the previous one. How has the light changed during the time it took to walk from A to B? What did you notice about the transition of atmospheres from east to west, or west to east? Do you feel more comfortable in one coffee shop versus the other? What do you like about the ambience of one more than the other? How do people occupy these spaces, and what makes them ideal for doing things beyond 'just having coffee'?

After you have satisfactorily taken in or inscribed this space in your mind, continue your exploration of the city. Take this tour as a model for further investigations, and use it to find more places that mirror each other. Discover new relationships between spaces and look at the routes you traverse everyday differently. Uncover special spaces in your city and share them with your friends. Think about how you can activate the poetic possibilities of everyday space by overlaying abstract systems or ideas onto ordinary activities, and question how this affects your relationship with the city.