

DEMANDE DE CONSULTATION

Poetic concessions about Paris

Demande de consultation, comes from the short title in the cards which were filled by the researchers at the Kandinsky library, *Centre Georges Pompidou*, Paris, in order to get into the documentary sources. Ask for a book, open it, look at it... We could maybe find there the answers to the research voyage.

In order to talk about France, I had to start from these *Demande de consultation* cards. Reach the centre of the *Hexagone*, reach Paris, where I could break the traditional schema and the typical ideas shown at images and stories of the French capital. So, where is the other city? as an answer we have the outskirts, *la banlieue*, with its problems and its discomfort feelings, *le malaise des banlieues*. Other unknown centres, not usually related to the capital, where other cities are living: the subterranean ones, as the underground and the sewer system; the artificial nature ones, les *Buttes Chaumont*, the romantic park, built from nowhere by Napoleon III's engineers; *La Défense*, the business city with its leaving rooms for yuppies; the unknown one, which remains us about another one and so on.

As a cloth of lies—*tissu de mensonges*—and truths, the project has been formed by loads of details and images of the obverse and reverse, the unknown and known; from the pass to the actual transformation of the city. I have begun with some maps from the XVIII century to nowadays, where the historical, forest and geographic France are shown—*historique, forestière, géologique*—, a metropolitan Paris City map, is also included with its *arrondissements*. Each map is the reference to a group of images, objects, words... related to the first one in a thematic sense.

Down there, at five hundred meters from the city floor, by the *Pont de l'Alma*, smells the dampness, *Collecteur Général, grand bateau, vanne, élévation, cunette de l'égout*... They say this is the other city, the invisible one, where the drains of dirtiness are obscure, where these city canals turn the other way. When I started the work of the projected cities, I thought about the underground; there where the other ones are, the other one is, the other face of the asphalt, darker and lighter. Here the designs are made by the shadow, the electric light is just a point at the end of the tunnel. Above the walls, the city; each drain, each tunnel, has a name, the other 39 of the *Charonne* street, the other street you cannot see, the other part that I miss. Coldness?, no, it is not cold at the underground, just some anguish when we reach the unfamiliar.