



DESERT TRUCK TERMINAL I

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The truck terminal in Agadez, Niger, is where transit migration from West Africa is organized through a system of routes, contacts, and hostels.

Saharan people live in open space, mobility is everything in this geography. They have developed different methods of mastering the terrain. Tuareg culture has worked out a system of information, a specific topographic literacy, with itineraries and means of communication. They are GPS embodied. In this environment, orientation makes all the difference between drifting and traveling, between fate and destination. Even during colonial times, the Tuareg remained in charge of the only thing that counts in this terrain: mobility.

This video clip takes a fresh look at the buzzing activities in the logistic nodes of the transit migration network that functions, in fact, admirably. Watching the preparations for the great desert crossing at the Agadez truck terminal, it became evident that, only through the patient and unexcited recording of this quiet daily routine that has sprung up around life-changing journeys, will the deliberate gesture of migratory self-determination fully emerge.

The unique expertise of the nomads in strategies of mobility and territorial literacy is in high demand, since a steady flow of sub-Saharan migrants transit through Agadez. It is a crossroad for transit migrants coming from the South who branch off into the Eastern route through the deadly Ténéré desert to Libya, and the Northern route via Arlit to Algeria. The video clip documents the various players in the migrant-transportation racket who serve mainly the Eastern line, using large desert trucks that bring cargo as well as people to the desert citadel of Dirkou. The scene is set in the courtyard of STT, the Sahara Ténéré Transportation Company in Agadez, where trucks are prepared, tickets sold, last prayers made. The quiet daily routine of handling life-changing journeys. Today, Agadez is the logistical center and transnational hub for 50,000 sub-Saharan transit passengers every year; the ancient nomad tracks have turned into a highway for work migrants.

Cluster: Sahara Chronicle ? Agadez

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