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Small STEPZ

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After the Second World War there were no signs of the 2000+ market stalls and the loud banter of the traders. Robert Colville describes a state of “weed-covered dereliction” in 1951 with the four grand market Gin Palaces looking “gaunt”. None of the three that remain still trade as boozers. The White Horse and The Lion have been converted to residential while The Lamb has progressed from “gaunt” to abandoned, aluminium grills filling in the gaps between the wrought iron filigree that adorns the entrances. It’s difficult to summon up the clamour of the masses that flocked here for political gatherings and market trading. The only people by the still standing market gates are a couple with a toddler scuttling over the gravel path on a scooter.

The builders of the new housing that has replaced the Market Estate – Parkview, have conceded defeat to the resonance of the Clock Tower and opened up that north-south axis, the low-rise blocks folding back discreetly trying to stay out of view. The failed modernist development of the previous scheme had attempted to contain and frame the tower at one end of a wide-open cracked paving-slabbed piazza. The beautiful mural depicting the heyday of the Caledonian Market didn’t even want to be there anymore when I last visited and was peeling off the wall in a bid for escape. The power of the clock tower, and the final acknowledgement from the planners that the estate was an architectural mistake, smashed those Le Corbusier inspired concrete pillars to the ground. A street name commemorates the short life of Christopher Pullen.

York Way flops over the apex of the rising ground at one end of the park and estate where the surviving Corporation of London blocks sail the skyline. This ancient thoroughfare previously known as Maiden Lane that EO Gordon, a century after Blake, dreamt linked the Pen Ton Mound near Copenhagen Street with its sister Holy site on Parliament Hill, and saw druid ceremonials process northwards to celebrate the solstices. In this vision York Way was one of the principle roads not of a New Jerusalem but a New Troy built by the war refugee Brutus. It now leads to a New Kings Cross.

John Rogers is the author of This Other London: Adventures in the Overlooked City published by Harper Collins. He directed the documentary The London

Perambulator, and also produced and co-presented Ventures and Adventures in Topography on Resonance 104.4fm. You can find out more about him at www.thelostbyway.com

Emotive Terrains - PhD Thesis

by Bill Psarras ©

2011 – 2015
Goldsmiths University of London

Title: *Emotive Terrains: Exploring the emotional geographies of city through walking as art, senses and embodied technologies.*

Abstract: Walking has always been the nexus between humans and the city, constituting an expression with artistic, cultural, performative and sensorial implications for an array of artistic and intellectual voices. This thesis investigates the personal and shared emotional geographies of the city (e.g. streets, tube stations) through performative and aesthetic considerations of walking, senses, metaphors and embodied technologies. Three areas primarily inform this thesis and shape its chapters:

1 contemporary urban walking theories and artistic spatial practices (e.g. flaneur, psychogeography)

2 sensory/technological aspects of walking and of contemporary city and

3 the investigation of emotional geographies.

The research has opened up new dialogues within the 21st century city by highlighting the sensory and social importance of walking as art and the flaneur in the production and exploration of emotional geographies. Consequently, it proposes a hybrid walking as art method, which is pursued through a trialectic of actions, senses and selected metaphors (e.g. “botanizing”, “weaving”, “tuning”, “orchestrating”) amplified by technologies. The core inventive method and methodology is personal or shared walking, shaped by the qualitative sub-methods of talking whilst walking, embodied audiovisual/GPS tools, metaphors and

online blogging. These methods contribute to a live reflection and documentation of sensory and emotional attentiveness.

Outputs of this research include a series of fully documented walking artworks in London and Athens, presented through audiovisual means and maps. This thesis argues that the trialectic of actions, senses and metaphors through technologies extends our understanding of walking and flaneur as a hybrid method of production and analysis. Consequently, it recontextualizes the concept of flaneur in the 21st century city by proposing the one of the *hybrid flaneur/flaneuse* through a merging of artistic, sensorial, sociological and geographical standpoints. Therefore, the thesis offers new and distinctive insights into the practices and theories of walking, regarding interdisciplinary explorations of emotional geographies of the city.

Bill Psarras (1985) is a Greek artist and musician. After BA and MA studies in audiovisual and digital arts in Greece and UAL, he holds a PhD in Arts & Technology from Goldsmiths University of London (AHRC funded). His walking-based work focuses on hybrid explorations of flanerie and emotional geographies in the 21st century city through walking as art, senses and embodied technologies. His works have been exhibited in international festivals (Europe, US, Australia) and group exhibitions. He has published in international conferences including ISEA 19th and Emotional Geographies 2013 and as a keynote speaker at the University of Chichester. He is a rock guitarist and the man behind Ludmilla MS ambient project. www.billpsarras.tumblr.com and www.hybridflaneur.wordpress.com

Small STEPZ

by Sophia Emmanouil

(please see p11-12)

‘Small STEPZ’ is a playful psychogeographical study of Chapeltown Road in Leeds through the eyes of her 5 year old explorer daughter, Elena. It is a collection of images, thoughts, objects, interventions and observations from Elena during a playful drift where her little STEPZ take her in urban spaces that become alive and animate in her eyes.



Small STEPZS in Chapeltown Road

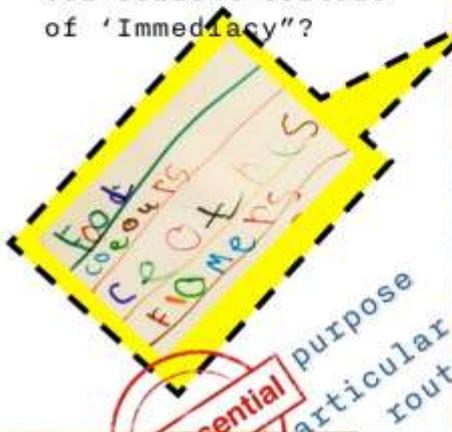
What if we begin to see the urban space as alive and animate as a 5 year old?

What if every object found had a story?

What are the chances of finding again the experience of the "quest" we lost in our current culture of 'Immediacy'?



Follow Elena in her playful drift in Chapeltown road, collecting objects, images, stories, textiles, tastes, and the stories she is creating in her attempt to find those elusive items.



(see previous images)

Sophia is an Architect and Senior Lecturer in Architecture at the University of Huddersfield. She is also a participatory arts facilitator and runs a range of projects in partnership with schools, community groups and other Voluntary and Community Collectives. Her research, which incorporates Situationist approaches to space, place and mapping, transgresses architecture, design and education, and takes experimental approaches to sustainability and psychogeography. Sophia's work also considers art, design and architecture from a public engagement perspective. Elena is five year old and loves painting, stories, exploring and discovering new places. She collects objects, takes pictures and makes collages. She likes popcorn and the sea. She is an explorer of all sorts. For more info about Sophia's Work: <https://www.hud.ac.uk/ourstaff/profile/index.php?staffuid=sdesse> Email: s.emmanouil@hud.ac.uk

Birmingham's Chrome Chrysalis

by Ally Standing

Birmingham: a city who, in terms of urban planning, lives by its motto, *Forward*. It is well known for its post-war period of redevelopment, which saw the demolition of many historic landmarks, rapid construction of social buildings and high-density public housing schemes, as well as a feverish phase of road-building. Despite brave and visionary intentions, it was this period of redevelopment which gave the city the 'concrete jungle' tag it has struggled to shake off since then. The Birmingham of today is ready to shed itself of this negative reputation; trying to come to terms with its status as a post-industrial, postmodern city. John Madin's Central Library of 1974, a prominent example of Brutalist architecture - which has been called 'Birmingham's most loved and hated building' - awaits demolition later this year having failed to achieve listed status, and as I write, the 1967 version of Birmingham New Street station is undergoing an extensive metamorphosis. Unlike the library, the station is still in daily use and is passed through by thousands of commuters each day, to whom the construction process is simultaneously revealed and concealed. Many users of the station

may not give much thought to the construction taking place - but for the seasoned urban explorer, it makes the perfect place to reflect upon the city's changing aesthetic ideals, and on how public spaces behave.

Birmingham New Street station, at the time of construction in 1854, had the largest single-span arched roof in the world. Sadly, this once record-breaking roof was dismantled after WW2 having been badly damaged during the Birmingham Blitz, and in 1964 this impressive Victorian station fell victim to the city's post-war period of 'brumolition' and was demolished to make way for a rebuild which would open in 1967, and which proved to be largely unpopular. The platforms in particular were dark, gloomy, and oppressive, with the weight of thousands of tons of concrete above: a million miles away from the bright and lofty expanse of the original station.

The current £550m redevelopment by Gateway Plus sees a complete transformation of the station's entrance, concourse and exterior, the latter being perhaps, for urban onlookers at least, the most visually dramatic element of the renovation: week by week, we watch the

main structure of the building become wrapped in a freeform metal framework, whose appearance does something to conjure up the image of an alien exoskeleton, growing like a strange fungus across the edifice. Onto this framework panels of reflective cladding are attached, spreading slowly over the structure like scales, creating an amorphous silver outer structure, an urban spectacle which is interesting on a number of levels. Not only is this aspect of the construction visually engaging, it also provokes thought about the shift from modernism to postmodernism. The imposing and monumental structures of the Brutalists with their unashamed use of concrete as a main building material, often forming the façades and interiors as well as the internal structure, have been replaced by the *trompe l'oeil* of postmodernism: structural support mechanisms hidden away in favour of materials that convey an almost impossible lightness of form. This 'trickery' is something apparent when observing the current development of New Street's exterior - the metal framework on top of the underlying structure revealing the secret behind the illusion.

