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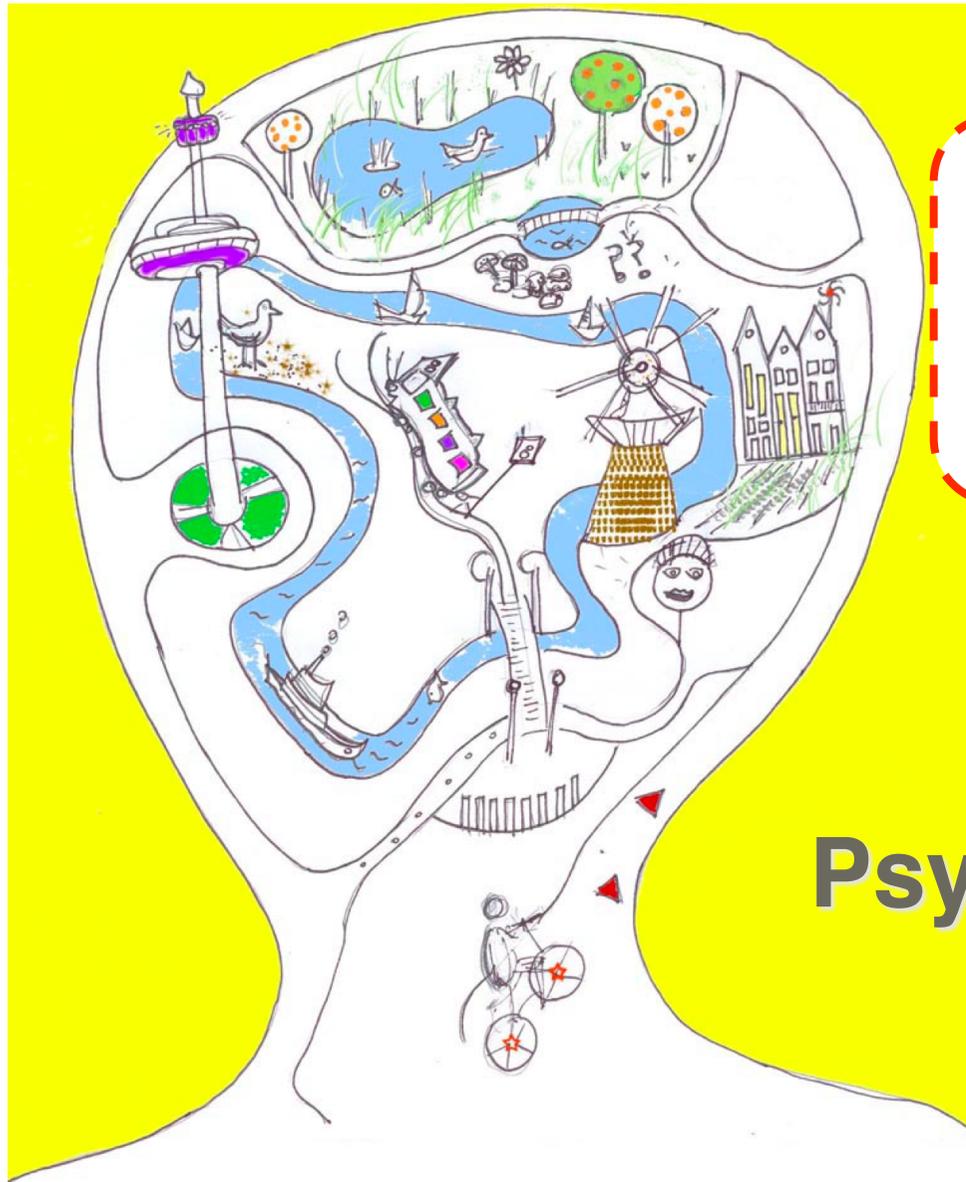
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A collaborative project made with **love** by  
Aggeliki Aggeli & Sophia Emmanouil

# Urban Utopias & Psychogeographical experiments



# PLEASUREVILLE

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# Our journey so far..

Our research is part of our **friendship** as well as our common academic and professional paths.

It grew out of our **curiosity** and our perception of **re-imagining** and **re-inventing** our surrounding **urban space**.

Today ,we will take you on a journey starting with the origins of **Psychogeography** & **contemporary urban expolorers** and will show you some of our experiments in urban contexts in the UK & the Netherlands.



# What if ...

...by encouraging small everyday **'situations'** which capture the moment and free the mind, a more interactive, sustainable and participatory society is able to evolve?

A **pleasureville** for all. Not only a playground for the rich and privileged.

Wouldn't it be great if we were allowed to **leave our mark** on our local and national geography? Wouldn't that lead to a more sustainable and content way of life?

**And here is how it all began..**

# The Situationists

In 1957 a few experimental European artists, stemming from the **radical** tradition of Dadaism and Surrealism, came together in Italy to form the Situationist International (SI).

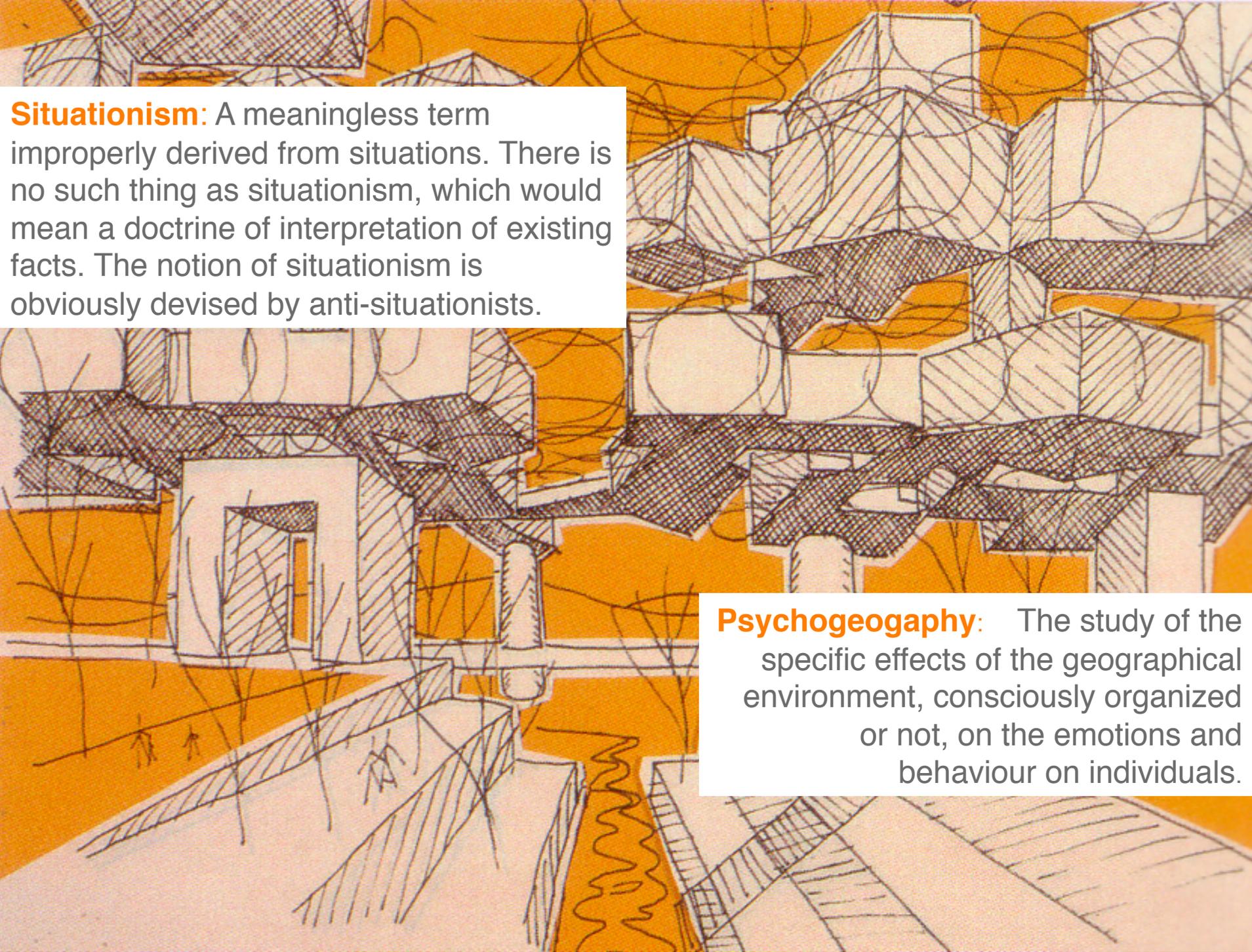
The name originated from their aim of **invigorating** everyday life through the creation of **participatory “situations”** as opposed to fixed works of art – an aim which naturally ran up against a whole range of material and mental obstacles produced by the existing social order.

Some of the ideas developed by the Situationists were:

**Unitary Urbanism (UU)** - an integrated city creation, UU envisages the urban environment as the terrain of participatory games

**Psychogeography** - play as free and creative activity, reinforcing the role of spontaneity, chance and playfulness in the creation of the city

**Detournement** - de-stabilisation of the observers' sense of reality



**Situationism:** A meaningless term improperly derived from situations. There is no such thing as situationism, which would mean a doctrine of interpretation of existing facts. The notion of situationism is obviously devised by anti-situationists.

**Psychogeography:** The study of the specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour on individuals.

# Contemporary urban explorers

The UK is one of the most surveilled countries in the world with at least one CCTV camera for every 14 people

**Locative media** - Digital media applied to real places and triggering real social interactions. A context in which communication can be readdressed, a new relationship between places and people

People move between spaces and disciplines, between reality and virtual reality

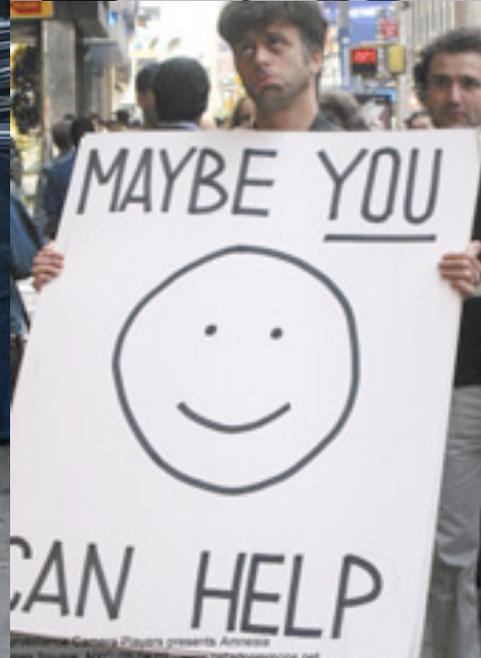


# Contemporary urban explorers

RE-ACTION ....

The Surveillance

Camera Players NY



# Contemporary urban explorers

Mapping space with emotions..

## Biomapping by Christian Nold

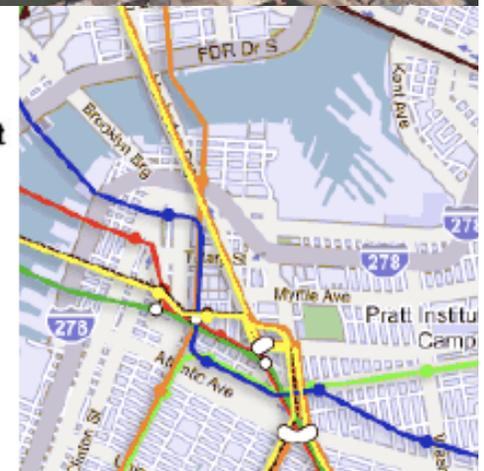
Biomapping is the process of recording our emotions & biological reactions to our surroundings.

*“... the interaction people have with each other is much more important than the built environment, although architects might think otherwise.” Christian Nold*



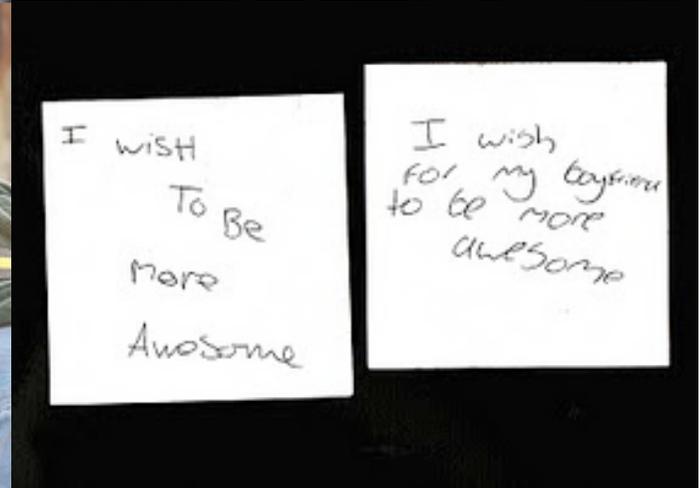
## New York City smell maps

The map was created from information gathered by Gawker.com (a Manhattan online blog), from people who use the subway daily.



# Contemporary urban explorers

**EVOKE!** Reclamation of urban space .. by Contra



# Something to try at home..

*“In accordance with what you are seeking, choose a country, a more or less populated city, a more or less busy street.*

*Furnish it.  
Use decorations and surroundings to the best advantage.*

*Choose the season and the time of the day.*

*Bring together the most suitable people, with appropriate music and drinks.*

*The lighting and the conversation should obviously be suited to the occasion, as should be the weather or your memories.*

*If there has been no error in your calculations, the result should satisfy you.”*

**(Debord,G. (1955) “Les Lèvres Nues”. )**



# Some thoughts...

People want to be **involved** and have their voices heard

As political beings with a curiosity towards explorations, people have set up a virtual world of information, **customised** to provide innumerable options for each individual

The city is a labyrinth of experiences, a playground for all

The advancement of technology & surveillance has brought the paradox of living in a city and being **invisible** while at the same time highly visible all the time..

Cities are undergoing a **metamorphosis**..but what is the future model of **symbiosis**?

**PART 2**



**URBAN EXPERIMENTS**

# Take a drift ...

Begin at .....

Find ..... and follow it  
until .....

Leave ..... at home and enjoy  
.....

Awaken ..... and let your feet take  
you around.

Follow ..... for a while and listen  
to .....

What a .....

Have a moment to yourself and .....  
and spread .....



purpose

particular route

destination

time limit

**Follow your instincts and your senses..**



By filling in the gaps, the participants were encouraged to conduct their own investigations during their walk and to capture the spirit with sketches or photographs if desired so.



Some of the recordings and reflections of the participants...



**Dirt and patterns created from natural elements and artificial materials spread like a mosaic in the cityscape. Colours and textures stimulate the senses and during both walks participants were particularly intrigued to touch and feel the streets, collect their smells and distinguish the materials.**



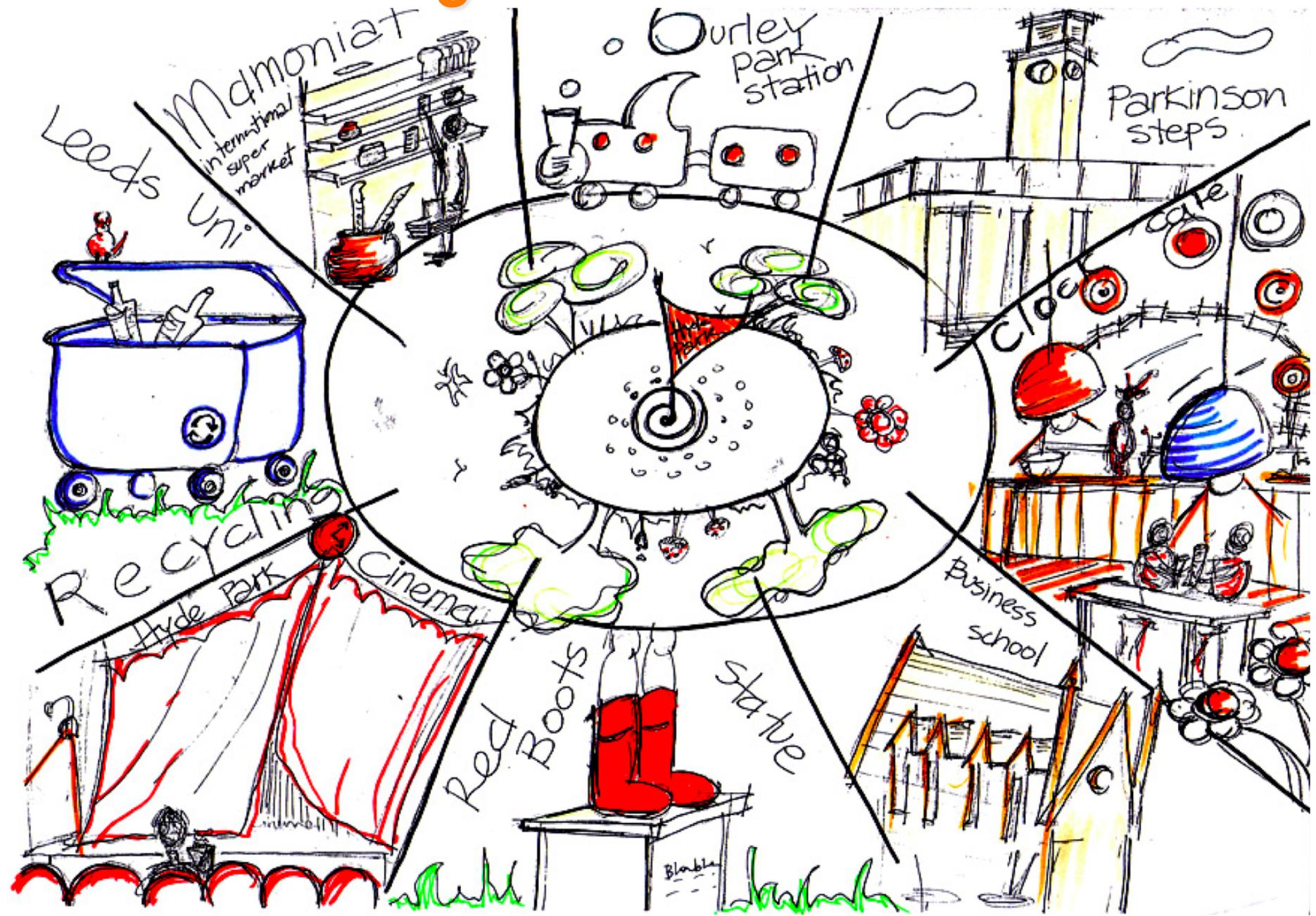
# Reflections..

With this game brought a **mix of feelings** and reactions to players, ranging from shy and **modest interaction** to **active intervention** - for example the 'dirt graffiti' that people were happy to draw on cars and reflective surfaces.

As citizens of urban spaces, we sometimes enclose ourselves in our own private world and minimize social interaction for the sake of convenience and fast movement. In the age of the vending machine, **we suggest a break from the box** and a more naïve approach to our surroundings.

This little group of people were transformed within two hours from passive inhabitants to **active citizens** using their curiosity, determination and skill to reinvent their environment and expand their personal horizons. It was a small situation that made a big change towards a **more participatory** and happy neighbourhood.

# A live board game...

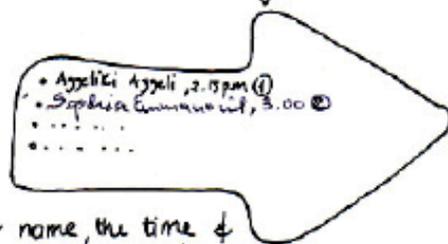


# A live board game...

Play Hyde park - Unity Day 2006.

Instructions:

- 1. Begin from your selected station on the board.  
Find the yellow arrow



& add your name, the time & the number of your stop (if it's your first stop, it will be No 1, if it's your second 2 etc..).

- 2. Do the route selecting your next stop according to your position, mood, boredom, happiness, impatience or anything else, in a few words randomly & once there find the yellow arrow & put down the same details again.
- 3. Finish the game when you have visited all stops indicated on the board.
- 4. Alternatively you can choose not to visit all of the indicated stops but add one or more stops of your choice. If you do, record them on a sheet of paper & tell us your reason for visiting, how long you stayed there etc.
- 5. Use any method of travel, but please record it.
- 6. We would love your notes, sketches, pictures & comments of the route. Please attach them on a piece of paper!
- 7. Enjoy the festival & get filled with love!

We love you all

Aggeliki ✨ Sophia  
5th August 2006.



The participants of this game visited one of the sites previously referred to and finish only when they had completed visiting all the mentioned sites. During the journey, notes and sketches had to be kept in order to tell a story about why the sites had been visited, in that specific order and what experiences were encountered on the way.

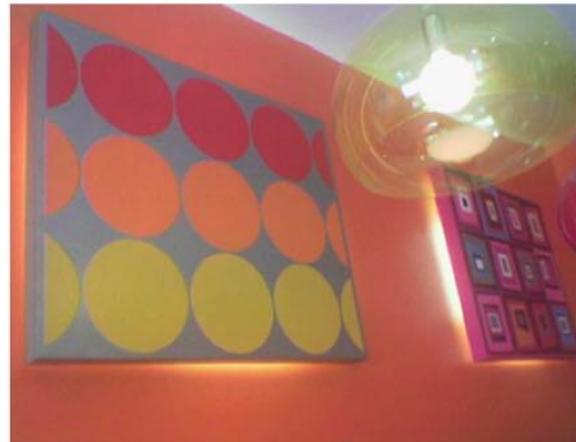


## some of the participants recordings..

- 1 I went to a workshop on Globalisation at the business school, there was a speaker from Nike. - Joseph Stevens.
- 2 Then I went to the park for lunch and thought about...
- 3 catching a train...

- 4 I remembered going to the cinema last night... I didn't really but film for is playing havoc with my dreams.
- 5 In the dream I had the most amazing food and the smells from the stalls in the park, inspired me to a walk to the international supermarket I walked to headingley...
- 6 where I caught the 1 bus to the Uni @ and parkinson steps @.

- 7 I then ran to Cloak cafe to get there for half seven to talk with friends about our days.



- ① The red boots statue hung above my red eyes. ? Did I see where red boot?
- ② The Clock cafe loomed in my mind.  
Café e pan au chocolat
- ③ But then the wheeled bins came into view and I realised I need to recycle.
- ④ I paired Hyde & Cinang pursuing red boots. Recycling e pan au chocolat merged.  
Then I had my idea for my latest zombie movie. Pan au chocolat eats red boots and recycled into donuts! Adults only

## Asteris, 30

- ① The red boots, ~~as~~ I went there first cause I feel that this statue is much better with the red boots, and always gave me the feeling that is alive.
- ② Just because is next to the statue. I never like it, never liked the word "business".
- ③ I remembered the passage on this point, so I thought I can go there and sit on the stairs, watch the people passing would be a nice choice.
- ④ I met a friend there and we started walking.
- ⑤ On our way, ~~Hyde park~~ we saw Hyde park Cinema and I told him that we can watch a movie later on if he is interesting.
- ⑥ Mainland for shopping. They do have some great products, which I like.
- ⑦ Last stop at clock cafe to meet all the others, for eating and drinking.
- ⑧ Never been there cause it smells bad.

# Reflections..

Through this **real-life game**, the hidden carefree feelings that we all carry inside, similar to those that children share during their play revealed. The aim was to **bring people out in the streets** and give them a reason to visit some places they already knew quite well, but then to consider their **emotional response** to each location.

The results were very pleasing. Almost all the participants came up with **beautiful narrations** of a walk that became their story. Space affects our behaviour and is the canvas upon which we draw our itineraries and unfold the string of our lives.

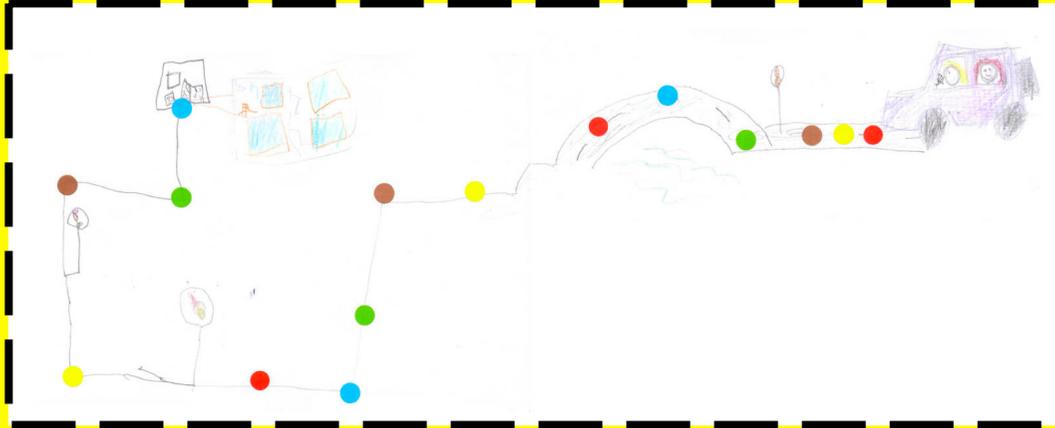
By recognizing which elements of our surrounding built environment are contributing to our well-being, and by making our voices heard about them, we are becoming participants in a new interactive way of designing and planning space. **Happy space.**

# Mental mapping from little people

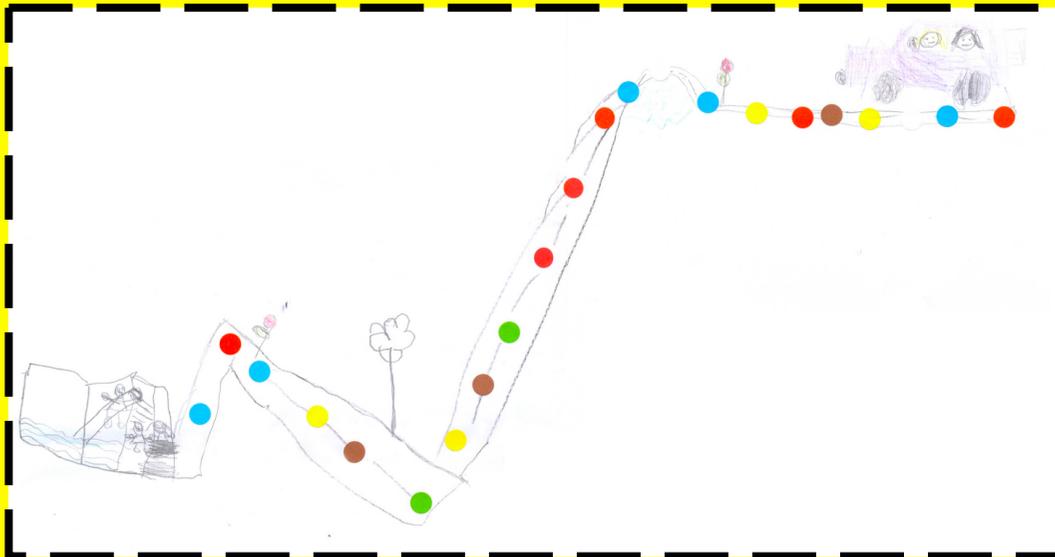
Our objective was to research **how children interact** with their surroundings, to discover what their perception of space is and how the built environment effects or is effected their behaviours. We were interested in how **memory** can shape children's idea of distance, interior and exterior space.

The **aim** of this experiment was to establish a way of communicating children;s ideas and imagination into urban planning and community design.





For this experiment, children aged 5 to 11 were asked to draw a diagram or sketch of their city according to their favorite places, to serve as a guide to a stranger who arrived in the city and does not know anything about it.



It was suggested that this guide should not, if possible, contain words, as there is no linguistic communication between them and the stranger as he does not speak the language. In the case of younger children, because their idea of the city was not easy to communicate, they were asked to sketch a favourite route either to school or on a day out.

# REFLECTION

Children are a very good source for subjective observations and conclusions about our environment, as they do not have the need to involve a great deal of objectivity in their explorations.

By recording their ideas, we can have a valuable source of imagination, creativity and innovation that can be incorporated into the adult planning of urban spaces.

We strongly recommend similar experiments as a new link between schools, children's centres and play areas and the architecture and planning schools and institutions, in order to re-educate ourselves in how to perceive our design, using the ideas of the **little happy** person that we once were.

## not a conclusion..

Running those experiments and some more, like anti shopping days, swapping life for the weekend, blindfold walks in the city and many many more, a more participatory society is proposed. A society where the opinions and idiosyncrasies of citizens are involved in the planning and realization of urban space.

There is the need for a re-evaluation of the influence and importance of **subjectiveness** in recording information about space, social structures and experiences. The procedures of mental mapping and the **instinctive exploration** of urban geography that have been described in this Study can unleash the power of the imagination and transform utopia into an everyday reality.

In our city of the future people will be able to leave a mark of **individuality** on their journey through life and be the creators of an environment that encourages, celebrates and reinforces sustainability, **diversity, improbability** and the **ability to dream**.

## ..beautiful beginnings

A close-up photograph of several pink, heart-shaped candies resting on a white, waffle-patterned wafer. The candies are arranged in a cluster, with some overlapping. The wafer has a distinct grid-like pattern. The text "Any questions?" is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font with a black outline.

**Any questions?**