

HOW TO
BE AN
EXPLORER OF
THE WORLD

PORTABLE ~~ART~~ LIFE MUSEUM

KERI SMITH

A PERIGEE BOOK

HOW TO BE AN EXPLORER OF THE WORLD

1. ALWAYS BE LOOKING.

(NOTICE THE GROUND BENEATH YOUR FEET.)

2. CONSIDER EVERYTHING ALIVE & ANIMATE.

3. EVERY THING IS INTERESTING. LOOK CLOSER.

4. ALTER YOUR COURSE OFTEN.

5. OBSERVE FOR LONG DURATIONS (AND SHORT ONES).

6. NOTICE THE STORIES GOING ON AROUND YOU.

7. NOTICE PATTERNS, MAKE CONNECTIONS.

8. DOCUMENT YOUR FINDINGS (FIELD NOTES) IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

9. INCORPORATE INDETERMINANCY.

10. OBSERVE MOVEMENT.

11. CREATE A PERSONAL DIALOGUE WITH YOUR ENVIRONMENT. TALK TO IT.

12. TRACE THINGS BACK TO THEIR ORIGINS.

13. USE ALL OF THE SENSES. IN YOUR INVESTIGATIONS.

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

OUR PERCEPTION OF THINGS CAN BE ALTERED
SIMPLY BY THE ANGLE WE CHOOSE TO LOOK
AT SOMETHING.

AN AVERAGE TREE LOOKS VERY DIFFERENT
DEPENDING ON IF WE VIEW IT FROM FAR AWAY
OR CLOSE UP. IT CHANGES AGAIN IF WE CHOOSE
TO LOOK AT IT AS A COLOR PALETTE. MAYBE
YOU DECIDE TO STUDY IT IN SEPERATE PARTS;
THE LEAVES, THE BARK, THE GROWTH PATTERNS,
THE ROOT SYSTEM. YOU COULD ALSO CHOOSE
TO SEE HOW A TREE HAS FUNCTIONED IN A
COMMUNITY (AS A MEETING PLACE), OR
ANECDOTALLY—WHAT STORIES DO THE PEOPLE
WHO LIVE AROUND IT HAVE TO TELL? WHO
PLANTED IT? WHAT SOUNDS ARE MADE BY THE
TREE? WHAT DOES THE SPACE AROUND THE TREE
LOOK LIKE? WHAT IS IT MADE OF?
HOW DOES THE TREE CHANGE VISUALLY
OVER THE COURSE OF A DAY? A YEAR?

CREATIVITY ARISES FROM OUR ABILITY TO SEE THINGS FROM MANY DIFFERENT ANGLES.

WAYS OF SEEING

THE FOLLOWING LIST INCLUDES A FEW OF THE METHODS THAT WE CAN USE IN OUR INVESTIGATIONS. WE CAN MAKE DECISIONS TO LOOK AT THINGS IN A VARIETY OF WAYS AT ANY TIME. THIS IS ONLY A PARTIAL LIST. YOU CAN ADD TO IT YOURSELF AS YOU GO.

SIGHT, SOUND, SMELL, TOUCH, TASTE, MOVEMENT,
SHAPE, TEXTURE. FUNCTION, SYMBOL, LANGUAGE
(DEFINITION, WORDS), SUBJECTIVELY, OBJECTIVELY,
IN COMPARISON, CONTRAST, NEGATIVE SPACE,
SYMMETRICALLY, COLOR, IN PARTS, ANECDOTALLY,
(AS A STORY), HISTORICALLY, ARTISTICALLY, SCIENTIFICALLY,
MORALLY, DIACHRONICALLY (ACROSS TIME), SYNCHRONICALLY
(ONE POINT IN TIME), METAPHYSICALLY, CONTEXTUALLY,
CULTURALLY, POLITICALLY, RITUALISTICALLY,
AESTHETICALLY, MICRO, MACRO, IN MULTIPLE,
ALONE, 2D, 3D, ABSTRACTEDLY,
MYTHICALLY, DIRECTIONALLY,
LINEARLY, AS A HABITAT,
AS A DEVICE,
LIGHTEARTEDLY,
AS A SIGN.

TION
ERED
AWAY
CHOOSE
MAYBE
PARTS
TERNS
CHOOSE
IN A
PEOPLE
WHO
THE
TREE

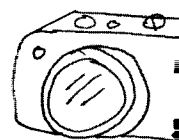
Double bodis?

DOCUMENTING AND COLLECTING METHODS AND TOOLS

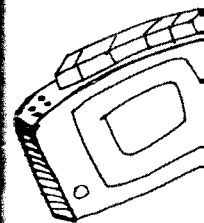
TO BE AN EXPLORER YOU DO NOT NEED ANY FANCY MATERIALS. ALL OF THE EXERCISES IN THIS BOOK CAN BE DONE USING WHATEVER YOU HAVE (JUST A PENCIL AND THIS BOOK). AS YOU GO ALONG YOU MAY WISH TO EXPLORE MORE DETAILED METHODS DEPENDING ON WHAT YOU HAVE AT YOUR DISPOSAL. HERE IS A SHORT LIST OF VARIOUS METHODS (YOU CAN ADD TO THIS LIST AS YOU DISCOVER NEW METHODS):

SIMPLE METHODS: WRITING, SKETCHING, COLLECTING OBJECTS, PENCIL RUBBINGS, PRESSINGS (FLAT OBJECTS), TRACING, CLAY RELIEF (PLASTICINE), TRANSCRIBING (CONVERSATIONS), PRINT MAKING (USING OBJECTS)

MOR



CAMERA/
PHOTOS

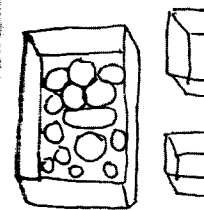


AUDIO RECORDING
MP3 PLAYER
COMPUTER, ETC.

METH



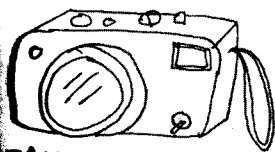
ZIPLOC



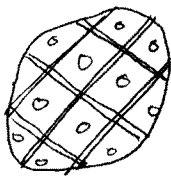
RECYCLED E



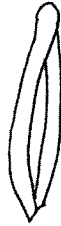
MORE INVOLVED TOOLS (OPTIONAL)



CAMERA/
PHOTOS



NON-DRYING
MODELING
CLAY
(PLASTICINE)



TWEEZERS



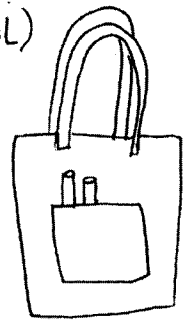
GLUE



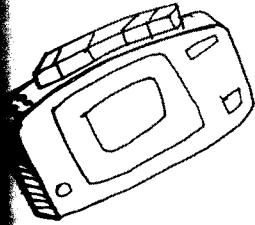
GLOVES



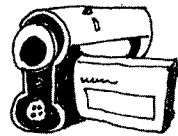
TAPE



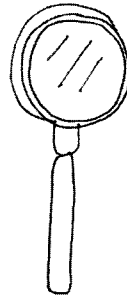
SOME KIND
OF BAG



AUDIO RECORDER,
MP3 PLAYER,
COMPUTER, ETC.



VIDEO CAMERA



MAGNIFYING GLASS



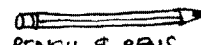
FIELD BOOK
FOR TAKING
NOTES



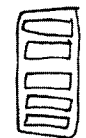
DATE
STAMP &
PAD



POCKET KNIFE

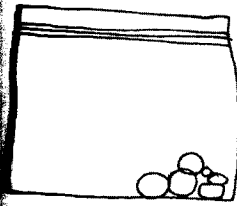


PENCIL & PENS

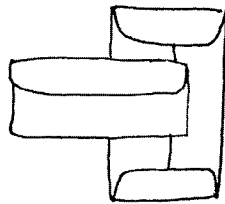


LABELS

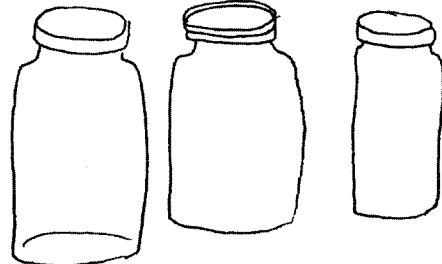
METHODS OF COLLECTING



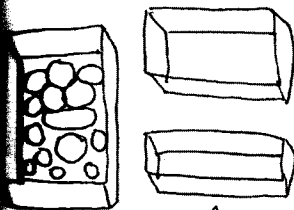
ZIPLOC BAGS



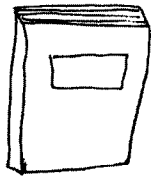
ENVELOPES



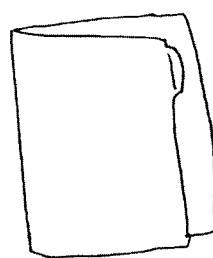
RECYCLED GLASS JARS



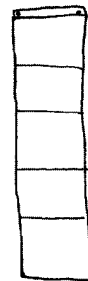
RECYCLED BOXES



JOURNAL



FILE FOLDERS



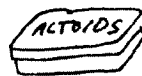
TACTILE
BOARDS



HANGING



PILL JARS
OR FILM
CONTAINERS



CANDY
TINS

Doubt bodis?

FIELDWORK TIPS

1. NEVER LEAVE HOME WITHOUT A NOTEBOOK AND PEN.
2. WHEN PRACTICING "DEEP LOOKING" OR "DEEP LISTENING" IT IS BEST TO WORK ALONE.
3. RESPECT THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH YOU EXPLORE. THIS APPLIES TO ASPECTS OF NATURE, HUMAN OR OTHERWISE (AND ALSO INCLUDES PROPERTY, PUBLIC OR PRIVATE).
4. IF YOU FIND YOURSELF BEING QUESTIONED AS TO THE REASONS FOR YOUR ACTIVITIES, THE PHRASE "I'M CONDUCTING RESEARCH" USUALLY SATISFIES THE NOSIEST INTERLOPER.
5. EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED (AND YOU WILL FIND IT).

Double bodis?

RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE SITTING

EXPLORATION #1



WRITE TEN THINGS ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE SITTING RIGHT NOW THAT YOU HADN'T NOTICED WHEN YOU SAT DOWN. USE YOUR SENSES. DO IT QUICKLY. DO NOT CENSOR. OKAY, BEGIN.

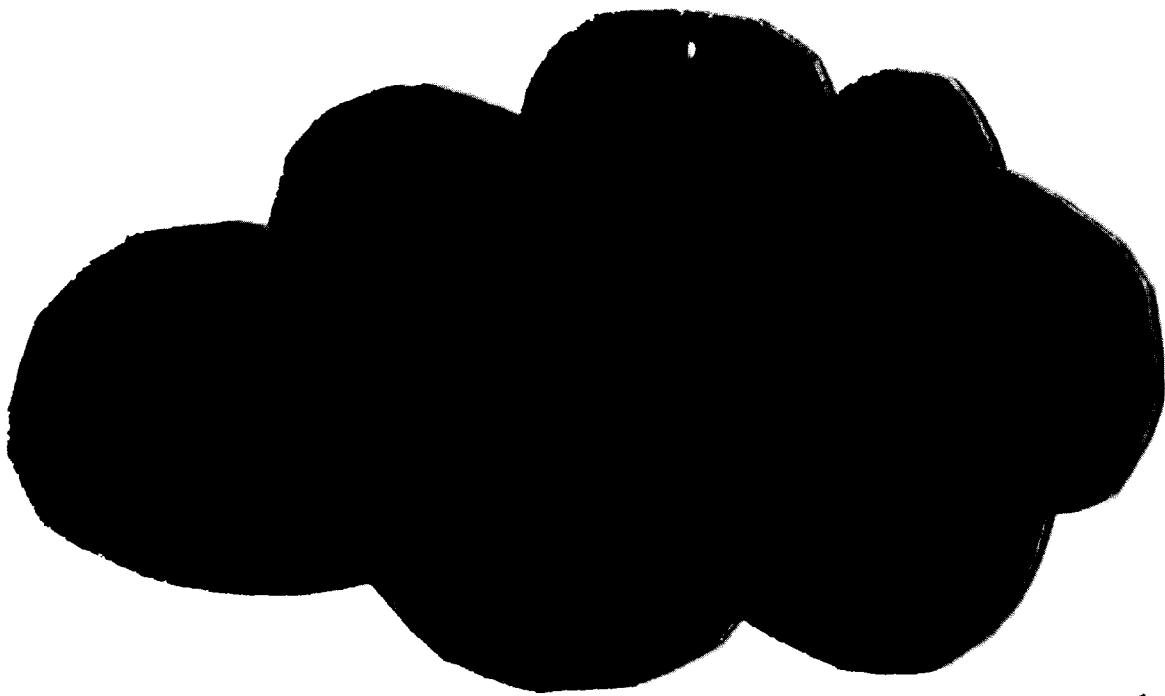
THE ASPECTS OF THINGS THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR US ARE HIDDEN BECAUSE OF THEIR SIMPLICITY AND FAMILIARITY. (ONE IS UNABLE TO NOTICE SOMETHING-BECAUSE IT IS ALWAYS BEFORE ONE'S EYES.) - LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

an identity thru this object.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG

COLLECT OBJECTS THAT RELATE TO YOUR CHILDHOOD OR INSPIRE MEMORIES. WRITE A BRIEF STORY TO ACCOMPANY EACH OBJECT.

ALTERNATE: RE-CREATE OBJECTS FROM YOUR CHILDHOOD USING FOUND OBJECTS OR READILY AVAILABLE MATERIALS (SUCH AS CARDBOARD, GLUE, STRING, TAPE, LEAVES, WOOD, OR ROCKS). YOU MAY CHOOSE TO RE-CREATE YOUR CHILDHOOD ROOM ON A MINIATURE SCALE USING FOUND MATERIALS.



FIFTY THINGS

WRITE DOWN (OR DOCUMENT)
FIFTY THINGS ABOUT ONE OF THE
FOLLOWING: A TRIP TO THE LIBRARY,
A TRIP TO THE GROCERY STORE,
A WALK IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

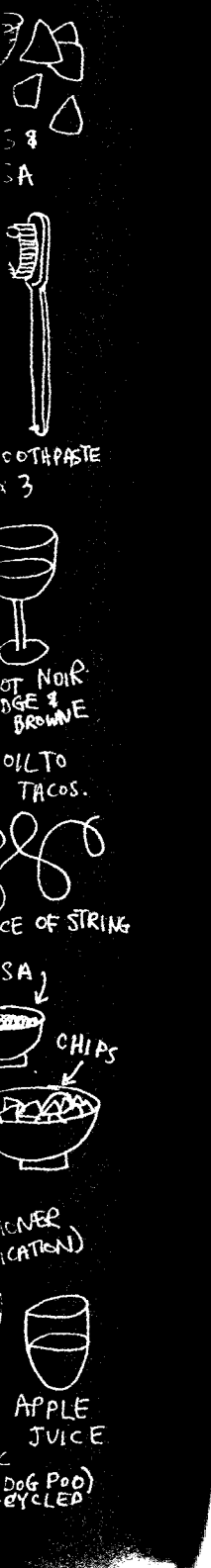
N*

BEFORE FAMILIARITY CAN
TURN INTO AWARENESS THE FAMILIAR
MUST BE STRIPPED OF ITS INCONSPICUOUSNESS;
WE MUST GIVE UP ASSUMING THAT THE OBJECT
IN QUESTION NEEDS NO EXPLANATION.
HOWEVER FREQUENTLY RECURRENT, MODEST,
VULGAR IT MAY BE IT WILL NOW BE
LABELED AS SOMETHING UNUSUAL.
- BERTOLD BRECHT

SOUND MAP

SIT IN A LOCATION FOR ONE HOUR.
DOCUMENT ALL THE SOUNDS YOU CAN
HEAR AND THE TIMES YOU HEARD THEM.
MARK THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE
SOUNDS IN RELATION TO YOU ON A MAP.





EXPLORATION # 15

CONSUMER

RECORD EVERYTHING YOU CONSUME OR EVERYTHING YOU PURCHASE IN ONE DAY/WEEK.

SOURCE: KATE BINGAMAN - BURT

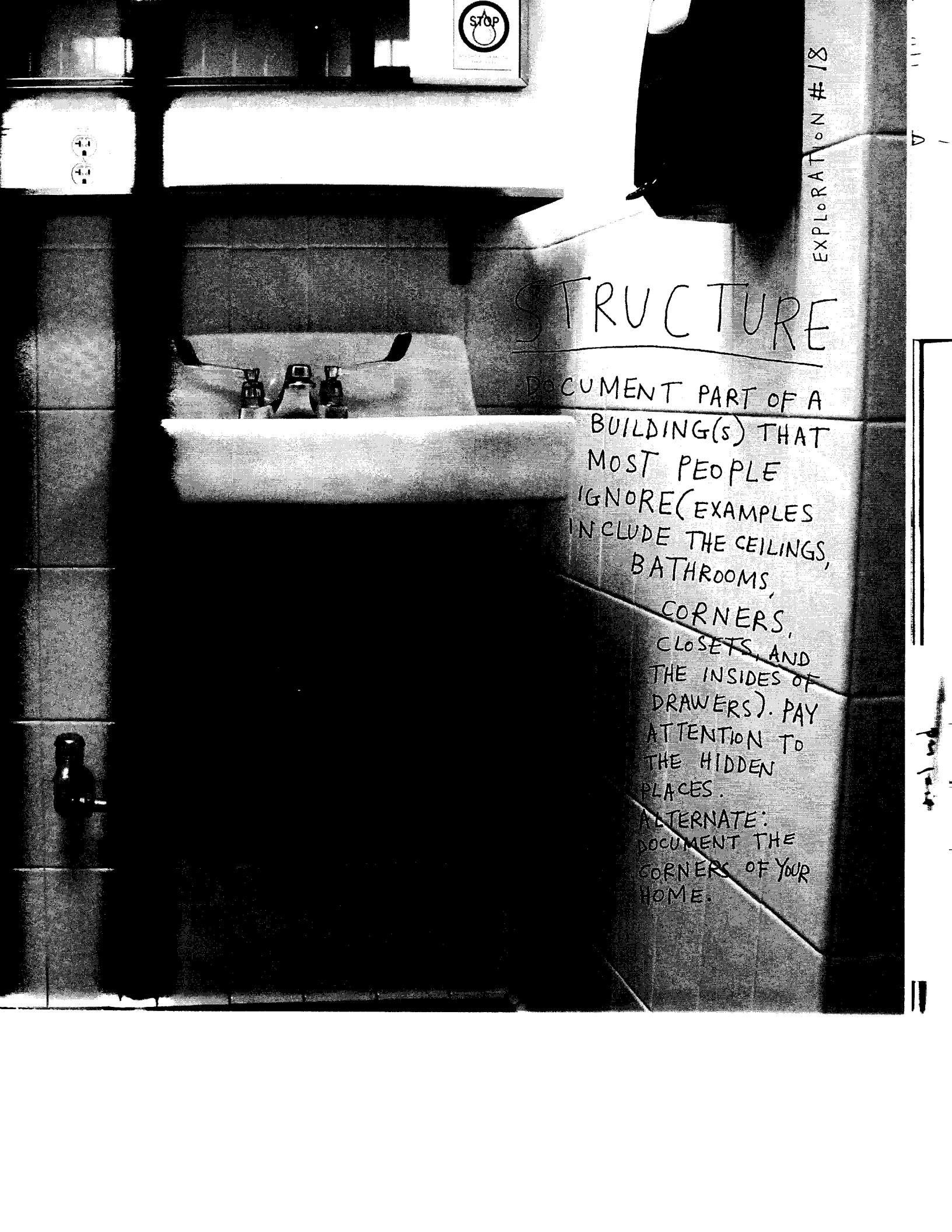


EXPLORATION #18

STRUCTURE

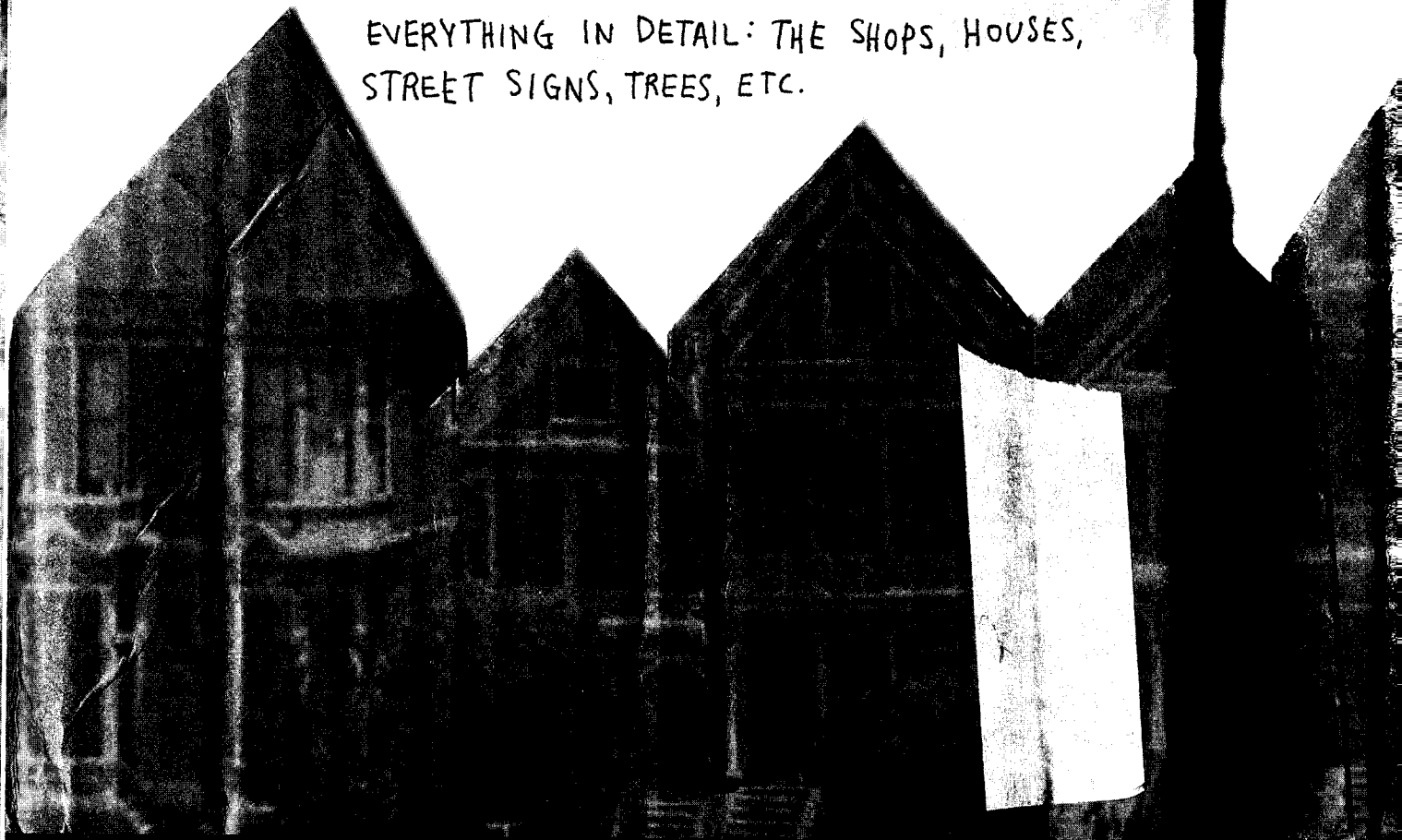
DOCUMENT PART OF A BUILDING(S) THAT MOST PEOPLE IGNORE (EXAMPLES INCLUDE THE CEILINGS, BATHROOMS, CORNERS, CLOSETS, AND THE INSIDES OF DRAWERS). PAY ATTENTION TO THE HIDDEN PLACES.

ALTERNATE:
DOCUMENT THE CORNERS OF YOUR HOME.



YOUR FAVORITE STREET

GO TO YOUR FAVORITE STREET. (IF YOU CAN'T GO THERE PHYSICALLY, THEN YOU CAN VISIT IT IN YOUR MIND.)
MAP IT OUT ON A PIECE OF PAPER.
THEN DESCRIBE (OR OTHERWISE DOCUMENT) EVERYTHING IN DETAIL: THE SHOPS, HOUSES, STREET SIGNS, TREES, ETC.



70

PEOPLE WATCHING

SIT IN A PUBLIC LOCATION
AND DOCUMENT PEOPLE
YOU SEE FOR ONE HOUR.
TAKE DETAILED NOTES.
MAKE SKETCHES OF
ONE ITEM THAT STANDS
OUT MOST ABOUT EACH
PERSON.

ALTERNATE: PEOPLE MAPPING
VISIT A LOCAL PARK OR
PUBLIC AREA. CREATE A
COLOR-CODED MAP OF THE
POSITION OF THE OTHER
PEOPLE IN RELATION TO YOU.
NOTE WHAT THE PEOPLE
LOOKED LIKE (WHAT THEY
WERE WEARING).

PEOPLE - MAPPING

should go w/ the
other outdoor projects -
E.G. neighborhood
description / street
life



TRAVEL HISTORY

COLLECT OBJECTS THAT TELL A
STORY OF YOUR TRAVELS. DOCUMENT
WHERE YOU FOUND EACH OBJECT.

EXPLORATION #34

INTERESTING GARBAGE

COLLECT PIECES OF DETRITUS YOU FIND INTERESTING OR INTRIGUING. DOCUMENT THEM IN SOME WAY, WITH SKETCHES, PHOTOGRAPHS, OR WRITINGS. TAKE NOTE OF WHERE AND WHEN THE ITEMS WERE FOUND. SOME THINGS TO PONDER: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT WE CHOOSE TO KEEP AND WHAT WE THROW AWAY? IS WHAT WE CONSIDER 'WITHOUT USE' MEANINGLESS? HOW CAN WE FIND NEW PRESENTATIONS FOR THESE THINGS?

SOURCE: CANDY JERNIGAN

STORIES ABOUT PLACE ARE MAKESHIFT THINGS. THEY ARE COMPOSED WITH THE WORLD'S DEBRIS. — MICHEL DE CERTEAU

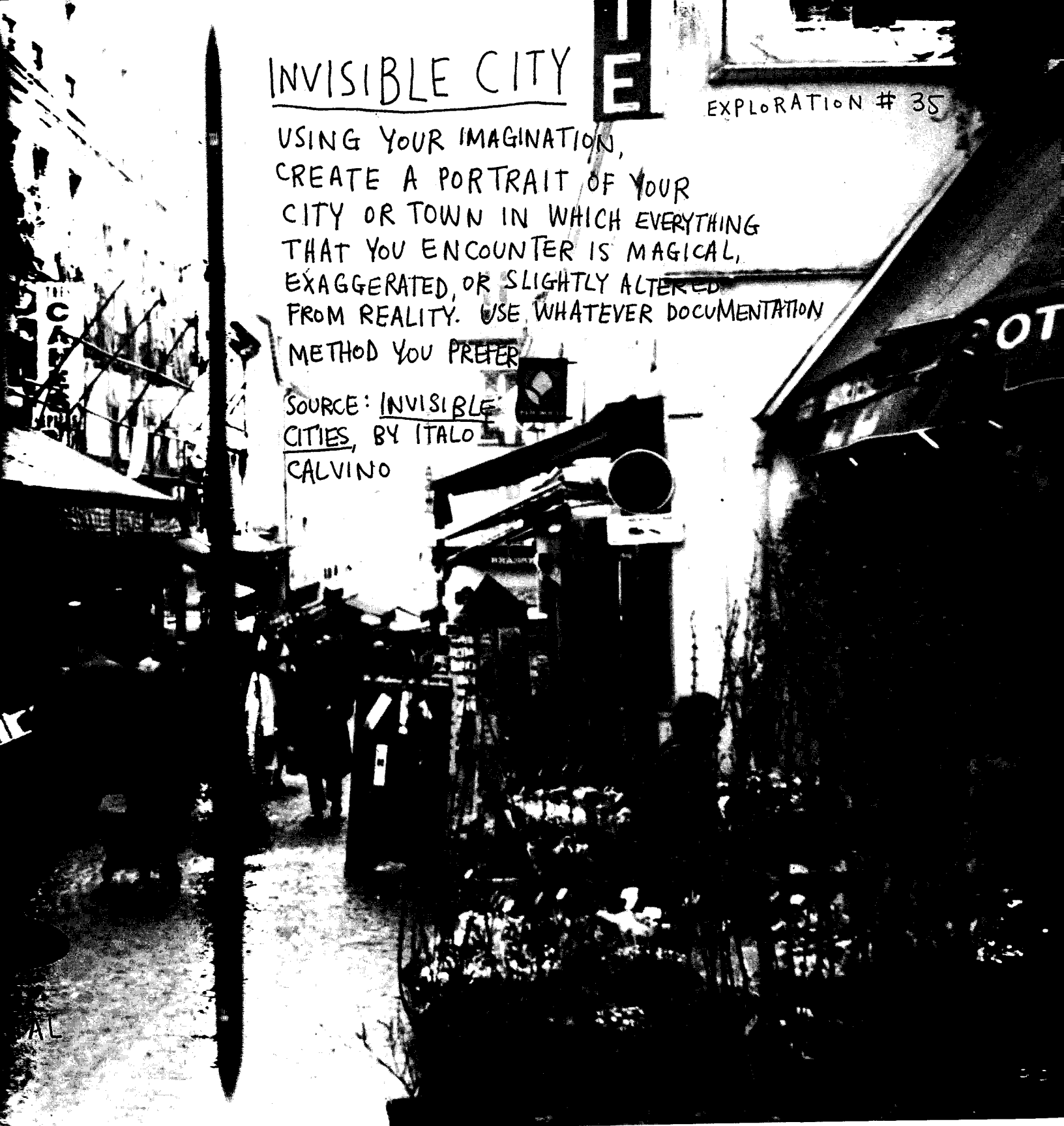
INVISIBLE CITY

U
E

EXPLORATION # 35

USING YOUR IMAGINATION,
CREATE A PORTRAIT OF YOUR
CITY OR TOWN IN WHICH EVERYTHING
THAT YOU ENCOUNTER IS MAGICAL,
EXAGGERATED, OR SLIGHTLY ALTERED
FROM REALITY. USE WHATEVER DOCUMENTATION
METHOD YOU PREFER

SOURCE: INVISIBLE
CITIES, BY ITALO
CALVINO



TIME OBSERVATION

COME UP WITH SEVERAL WAYS OF DOCUMENTING THE PASSAGE OF TIME, BASED ON WHERE YOU ARE SITTING.

CAN CONTEMPORARITY IN
LEARNED TO KNOW IN
- M. R. P. A.

ALTERED

FIND A WAY TO ALTER YOUR PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD (YOUR SENSES) WHILE ON YOUR TRAVELS. EXAMPLES ARE SQUINTING YOUR EYES TO BLUR YOUR VISION, WEARING COLOR-TINTED GLASSES, CLOSING ONE EYE, WEARING EARPLUGS, HANGING UPSIDE DOWN FOR A TIME, WALKING AS SLOWLY AS POSSIBLE, AND PLUGGING YOUR NOSE WHILE EATING.

DOCUMENT THE EXPERIENCE.

STATES



ANECDOTE: I HAD A TEACHER IN ART SCHOOL WHO TURNED EVERYTHING HE LOOKED AT UPSIDE DOWN. EVERYTHING. IT WAS AS IF HE COULD SEE IT BETTER THAT WAY. IF HE COULDN'T MOVE IT, HE WOULD GET ON HIS HANDS AND KNEES AND TURN HIMSELF UPSIDE DOWN. OFTEN WE FORGET ABOUT THE PHYSICALITY OF OBSERVING, LITERALLY CHANGING OUR VIEWPOINT OR PERSPECTIVE.

LOCAL LORE

DOCUMENT A PLACE BY INTERVIEWING PEOPLE ABOUT IT. YOU CAN TRANSCRIBE BY USING SOME KIND OF RECORDING EQUIPMENT OR BY FILLING OUT AN EXPERIENCE DOCUMENTATION LOG.

SOURCE : HARRELL FLETCHER

WHAT WE NEED TO QUESTION IS BRICKS,
CONCRETE, GLASS, OUR TABLE MANNERS, OUR
UTENSILS, OUR TOOLS, THE WAY WE SPEND OUR
TIME, OUR RHYTHMS. TO QUESTION THAT
WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE CEASED FOREVER
TO ASTONISH US. WE LIVE, TRUE, WE BREATHE,
TRUE; WE WALK, WE OPEN DOORS, WE GO DOWN STAIRCASES,
WE SIT AT A TABLE IN ORDER TO EAT, WE LIE DOWN
ON A BED IN ORDER TO SLEEP. HOW? WHY? WHERE? WHEN?
WHY? - GEORGES PEREC

SELF - ETHNO

USE YOURSELF AS YOUR SUBJECT FOR DOCUMENTATION
DOCUMENT IN DETAIL ALL OF YOUR MOVEMENTS,
ACTIVITIES, BEHAVIORS, AND CONVERSATIONS
THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF A WEEK.
INCLUDE DATE, TIME, & PLACE.

AL-
AS
Do
M
D

EXPLORATION #45

ETHNOGRAPHY. N. THE DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF A PARTICULAR CULTURE THROUGH FIELD RESEARCH.

SELF-ETHNOGRAPHY. N. THE DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE SELF AS A FOREIGN CULTURE THROUGH FIELD RESEARCH.

CKS,
OUR
ND OUR
AT
FOREVER
REATHE,
STAIRCASES,
E DOWN
HERE? WHEN?
PEREC

ETHNOGRAPHY

DOCUMENTATION.
VE MENTS,
TIONS
WEEK.
LACE.

ALTERNATE: CHOOSE ONE SPECIFIC ASPECT OF YOUR EXISTENCE - DOCUMENT (E.G., DETERMINE MANY STEPS YOU TAKE ON A DAILY BASIS).

good for in-class?
good for everyday life,
TIME people...

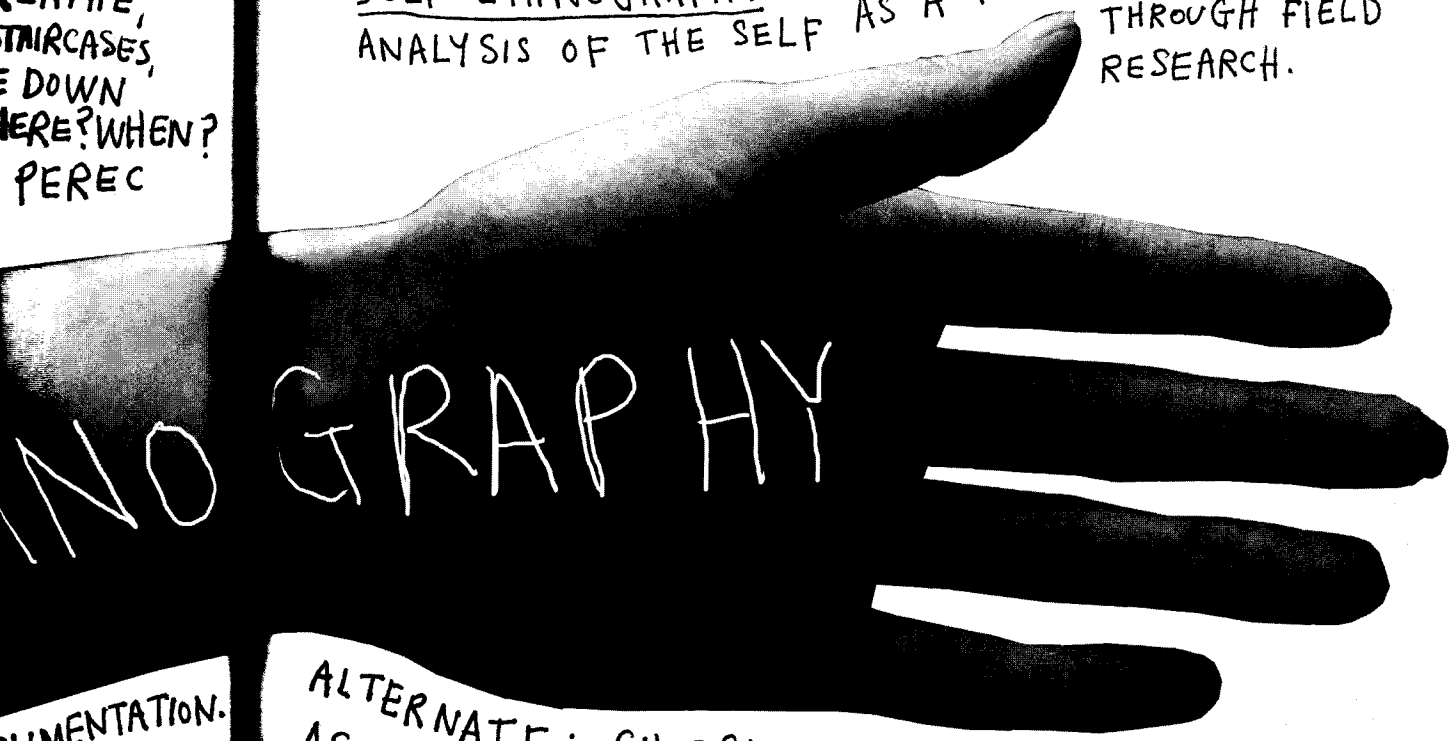
DAILY ACTIVITIES

EXPLORATION #45

ETHNOGRAPHY. N. THE DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF A PARTICULAR CULTURE THROUGH FIELD RESEARCH.

SELF-ETHNOGRAPHY. N. THE DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE SELF AS A FOREIGN CULTURE THROUGH FIELD RESEARCH.

CKS,
OUR
ID OUR
AT
FOREVER
REATHE,
TAINCASES,
E DOWN
ERE? WHEN?
PEREC



ETHNOGRAPHY

DOCUMENTATION.
MENTS,
IONS
NEEK.
ACE.

ALTERNATE: CHOOSE ONE SPECIFIC ASPECT OF YOUR EXISTENCE TO DOCUMENT (E.G., DETERMINE HOW MANY STEPS YOU TAKE ON A DAILY BASIS).

FOUND SMELLS

GO FOR A WALK. MAKE A LIST OF ALL THE SMELLS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD. BE AS DETAILED AS POSSIBLE. ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY SOURCES.