HOW TO BE AN EXPLORER OF THE WORLD

PORTABLE ART LIFE MUSEUM

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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. EVERYTHING 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 INDETERMINACY.
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 separate 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 do 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 ARISTES 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 ONLY A PARTIAL LIST. YOU CAN ADD TO A VARIETY OF WAYS AT ANY TIME. THIS IS NOT A COMPLETE LIST. YOU CAN ADD TO IT YOURSELF AS YOU GO.

1. WAY
2. AWAY
3. AWAY

SIGHT, SOUND, TOUCH, MOVEMENT, TASTE, SMELL.

FUNCTION, SYMBOL, LANGUAGE, CONTRAST, NEGATIVE SPACE, SCIENTIFICALLY, SUBJECTIVELY.

IN COMPARISON, HISTORY, SYMBOLICALLY, CROSS-REFERENCES, ARTISTICALLY, CONTEXTUALLY, SYMMETRICAL, AS A STORY, MENTALLY, MASTERY, MACRO, MACRO,

ONE POINT IN TIME, POLITICALLY, MORAL, ARTISTICALLY, CULTURALLY, AESTHETICALLY, 2D, 3D, ABSTRACTLY, ALEXANDER.

LINCOLN, AS A DEVICE, LIGHTS, RESPONSES.
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), TRANSCRIPTION (CONVERSATIONS), PRINT MAKING (USING OBJECTS)
MORE INVOLVED TOOLS (OPTIONAL)

- Camera/Photos
- Non-Drying Modeling Clay (Plasticine)
- Tweezers
- Tapes
- Gloves
- Some Kind of Bag
- Audio Recorder
- MP3 Player, Computer, etc.
- Video Camera
- Magnifying Glass
- Field Book for Taking Notes
- Pocket Knife
- Pencil & Pens
- Labels

METHODS OF COLLECTING

- Ziploc Bags
- Envelopes
- Recycled Glass Jars
- Recycled Pill Jars or Film Containers
- Journal
- File Folders
- Tactile Boards
- Hanging
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).
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
EXPLORATION #6

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.

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
STRUCTURE

EXPLORATION # 18

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

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.
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.
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-ETHNOGRAPHY

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, AND PLACE.
NOGRAPHY

ETHNOGRAPHY n. the documentation and analysis of a particular culture through field research.

SELF-ETHNOGRAPHY n. the documentation and analysis of the self.

THE DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF A FOREIGN CULTURE THROUGH FIELD RESEARCH.

ALTERNATE: CHOOSE ONE SPECIFIC ASPECT OF YOUR EXISTENCE.

DAILY STEPS YOU TAKE ON A DAILY BASIS.

DOCUMENTATION. ASPECTS OF DOCUMENTATION. WEEK.

TIME OF YEAR:
Good for everyday life.

DAILY ACTIVITIES:

KICKS.

AND OUR BREATHE.

WHERE IS \:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\:\\  

DAILY ACTIVITIES:

Good for everyday life.

KICKS.
ETHNOGRAPHY, N. THE DOCUMENTATION AND SELF-ETHNOGRAPHY. N. THE FOREIGN CULTURE THROUGH field research. ANALYSIS OF THE SELF AS A SPECIFIC DOCUMENT. MANY STEPS YOU TAKE ON A DAILY BASIS.

ALTERATIVE: CHOOSE ONE SPECIFIC ASPECT OF YOUR EXISTENCE TO DOCUMENT (E.g., DETERMINE HOW MUCH TIME WE SPEND AT HOME, WHAT OUR NECKS BREATHE, ETC.) CASES.

FOREVER EXPLORATION #45
EXPLORATION #49

FOUND WORDS

USING THE EXPERIENCE LOG, DOCUMENT AN OVERHEARD CONVERSATION.
ALTERNATE: COLLECT WORDS YOU FIND INTERESTING.
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.