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WALKS IN PROG RESS

a book for the everyday wanderer

PUBLICATION

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INTRODUCTION

OUR WALKS IN PROGRESS

NINA MCCUE

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YOUR WALKS



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Designed to fit the space of our pockets, Walks in Progress is a phone-sized book comprising a series of potential experiences for the walking wanderer. It acts as a small everyday antithesis to digital abundance, offering an analogue phone replacement to take on the go. Following a trace of the radical style left by Yoko Ono's book Grapefruit, it prompts first to leave our phones behind:

Dig a hole.
Bury your phone.
Scatter the ashes of the
internet over it.
Cover with dirt

In an age of digital saturation, the idea of taking our time, slowing down, and living in the moment often appears as a surpassed cliché, a distant utopia. Most of what is regarded as human is inevitably lost to





these rapid processes; and mundane spaces forgotten.

Developed as a collective inquisition by five artists at the Royal College of Art, WIP is carved out from the urgency to address our research question:

“How do we regain moments of slowness and contemplation in a rapidly moving digital world?”

The question is a branch of a wider inquiry, of what exactly we “lose” to the digital world, when inhabiting everyday life, that must be regained. Whether that is spontaneous interactions, mundanity, contemplation, inspiration, or simply being present.

Our prompts were developed based on multiple aimless walks conducted in different regions of London by each one of the creators. The observations gathered allowed us to generate both reflective and creative responses that mark the five-chapter division of the book.





The format and layout of the book is designed with reference to a scrolling motion, using a French Fold binding and overlapping images, while the motion of vertically flipping pages nods to a classic flip-phone.

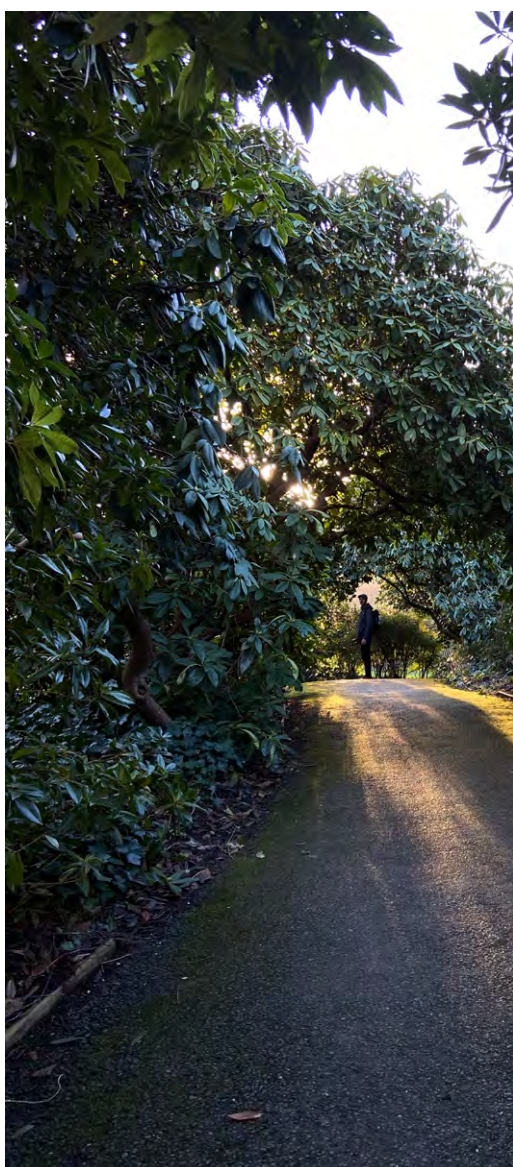
More importantly, the book also reserves blank pages at the end for you to continue yourself, on your own walks. We have also bound this book using screws, allowing you to add more pages, jumble the order, or take just a few with you to go.

Indeed, what Walks in Progress will look like depends on our personal and sensorial responses to the prompts. A book, a journal, a manual, a game, a map, and more; WIP then can also be a mirror reflecting our aspirations for a less digital and more connected future.

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.” - MARCEL PROUST

Interrogate, question, reframe, reinterpret, reject our prompts. Some are meant to be metaphors, others simple gestures. No matter the path your feet will walk, treat everything with respect, every face you might encounter with kindness.

our
walks
in
progress

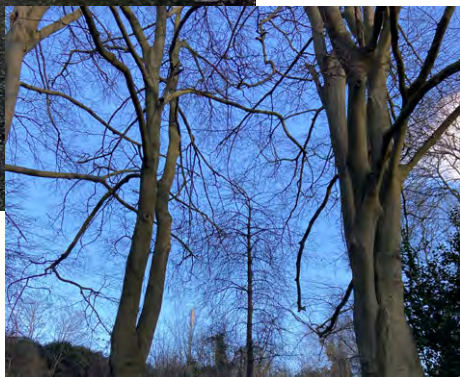


When I walk a path I have walked a hundred times before

NINA MCCUE *photographer*

I find that my mind is the one that starts meandering to new places; thoughts it has never come across before. This is usually when I feel most creative and in-tune with myself. I wanted to follow suit with my feet and let myself find my way through the terrain instinctively, traveling down paths with no clear direction, only the curiosity of where chance will lead me.

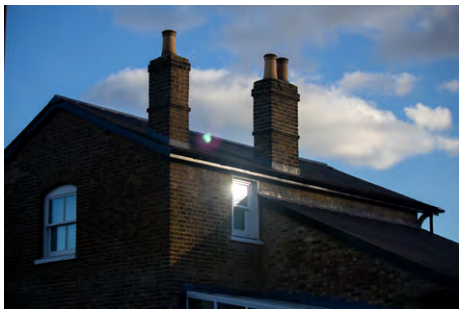
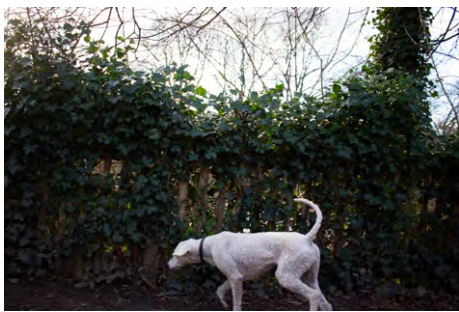
For this project I wandered throughout Hampstead Heath in London and found I kept being drawn to how light and shadow painted the terrain around me.

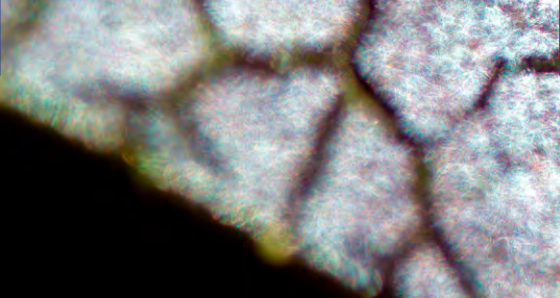




I discovered that the colors and texture of my surroundings had a surprisingly large impact on my mood. Especially in a natural environment where the ambient noise is fairly quiet, it gave me space for contemplation and exploration through my other senses. I realized I feel most connected to my environment through tactile exploration, feeling the texture of plants and squelching my toes through the mud. The beauty of this practice is each wanderer will discover what speaks to them when they actually slow down and listen.

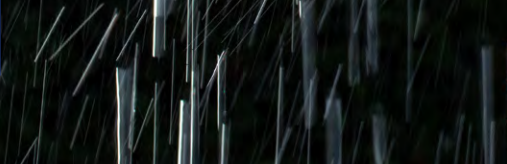






Take your shoes off for 1000 steps, describe the different textures you encounter.





If it is raining catch a raindrop in your mouth, if it is sunny let the sun heat up your tongue, if it is neither take a deep breath in and out until you feel calm.





Pick up a handful of dirt and inspect every detail.



Assign right and left to two sides of a coin, flip the coin at every intersection, draw the path you think you walked.





My attempts of exploring new paths along the city and its relation to how I view myself in it

DOR COHEN **illustrator & designer**

As I'm getting to know myself and learn new things, I appreciate the places I've been in better. The more I'm connected with my environment, I feel calm, It allows me to explore mental states within me and find some sort of harmony that inspires me. I believe there's a link between how connected we are with ourselves and the way we communicate with our environment, as we were destined to be born into the world.



The world and us also created artificial things like modern life and technology to help us live with others and stay connected. But as all of these things are relatively new, we have to find balance in the way we interact with technology so we won't get distracted. We can call that 'being digital'. And that does not mean being less connected with nature or ourselves.

The prompts I created help me concentrate my full bodily connection to the environment, and I believe that with that practice I will find the answers to live a turley honest life alongside modern technology.



Explore your surroundings and go off the main paths. Don't be afraid to step on the mud and choose a new route that you have never walked before.



Build a mind map of the routes you walked through, let your senses flood you with the delicate information that surrounds you. The position of the sun, the sounds around you, the caress of the wind, the visual landscape. Try to remember them.



Stay in one place until something changes. What changed? Try to capture it in any form you'd like.

For example you can paint the swatches of the sky, vegetation, and main sites. Then return to that place at the same hour on a different day and paint the swatches again.



Light is temporal. Try to capture the colours and the forms in front of you with a quick sketch. Let your hand move on its own on the paper and pick up speed.





Think about all the things you've seen today. Draw from memory one moment or an object you remember vividly. There are strong graphic compositions hidden in any environment.



The Wondering Wanderer: Imaginative Walking

AURORA FANTECHI *writer & artist*

When dealing with social anxiety, some degree of neurodivergence or trauma, what is often regarded as the simple act of going outside can be daunting for many. Whether it is going getting groceries in the overwhelming environment of the city or taking a walk into the unpredictable landscapes of nature, being confronted with the unknown often prevents us from having experiences; stuck, scared.

In this context, walking can be framed in terms of motion, both a physical and an emotional act working against that fear. With this spirit, I developed a series of prompts to reframe the relationship between inside and outside, known and unknown, in favour of bridging rather than separation. The aim is ultimately to propose different ways to think about the self, space, and safety, possibly alleviating the anxiety that some people face when going outside. Here,



imagination is used as a tool to shape and redefine the limits of our surroundings, to feel more in control, more grounded and ultimately safer. Though the act of walking serves as the initial device to draw the boundaries of these imaginary worlds, it is, in a way, secondary. What is truly important is the act of looking for corners of silence within chaos. Stressing on the walk as a quest for silence to show that it is possible to experience the world even when it seems unimaginable.

A walk as a testing ground to our limitations through curiosity, creativity, and novelty.

A walk as a caring act towards ourselves and embracing those limitations.

A walk where our bodies can inhabit the in-between spaces between physical and emotional.

A walk that moves you.



Look around you: which building/structure/space is the safest to you? Go inside/by/near it and sketch an imaginary structural attachment to said spaces so that they feel safer to you.



There's a crack on the sidewalk, can you imagine what would grow there? Find it and place it on the crack.

TUTTA
LA TERRA FREME:

ALI
UCCELLI ~~ONDE~~ VOLANO
CUCCOLI / ~~ONDE~~ RITORNANO AGLI
LORO MADRI

ACCIA DOPO ACCIA SI ~~PERE~~
RIEMPIE IL VASO (tempo)
ACUREZZI LA FACCA CON LA MANO
INESTIMABILMENTE UNO(!)

SEMBRA TACERE E FARE STACCO ^{PER MANO} ^{HA CARICCA IN}
FINIRÉ PIU' D'ELLA SORO I MIE' ^{VISSO} ^{DI SMO}
BAGNATI: DAL BORDO NE SCARPA
DARE LA VITA E' SUO UN ATTO
FUNZIONALE

~~AL~~ AL PARI DI UNO PA
FUGGIRE / SCARPA

Walk at dawn. Can you write what your surroundings feel like as they are slowly awakening, and so are you?

Walk at sunset. Can you write what your surroundings feel like as they are slowly going to sleep, and so are you?



Look at the last two prompts. Are there any recurrent ideas, images, or words? If so, can you visually distil them into a piece of writing, a poem that unites sunrise and sunset, generating a new imaginary space where your mind can wander/wonder.








Reclaiming space for the wandering mind

KANTO OHARA MAEDA
animator & artist

I believe it would be an understatement to suggest that the takeover of the 'smartphone-age' has completely changed our way of living and even our way of thinking. Science suggests our attention spans have now dipped lower than that of a goldfish.[1] And now, whenever we sit on the underground, wait for our friends in the café, even while sitting on the toilet – we fill those moments of meaningful 'nothing-ness' with some form of meaningless 'something-ness'. The human being has forgotten how to be still.

Amidst the so-called 'information-age' we arguably live in a distraction-based society, as opposed to one that is attention-based. Distraction appeals to us as a way to divert our lack of focus, or to avoid boredom. Yet what do we lose, without true focussed observation, and even without boredom?

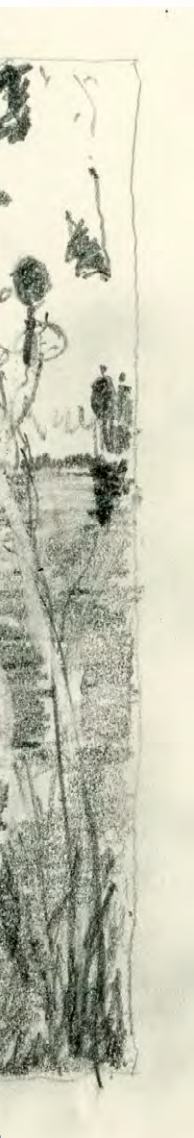





I have been interested in my walks, to reclaim moments when our minds can become a blank canvas. I believe that when we stimulate our bodily senses, the mind becomes liberated, and is allowed to wander, as our feet do.

As an animator and storyteller, these moments provide me with my greatest inspirations. It is when I expect nothing to happen, and I create time for nothing to happen – this space of stasis and slowness – that the most unexpected of revelations arise.

Imagination and boredom, I believe, are strongly linked. My prompts are written to first observe closely the phenomena around your walk, using all your senses. And secondly to reimagine them and make them your own. Question the strangeness of my prompts. Embody the space around you. And let it retell your walk, the way you live it.





Listen to the sound of your feet
on the surface you walk.

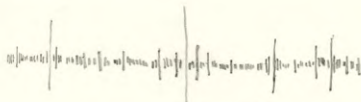
Describe it as a food.

THE SOUND OF
RAIN HITTING A POOL



"FRIED EGGS SIZZLING IN
OIL IN A FRING PAN"

THE SOUND OF
SQUELCHING MUD UNDER FOOT

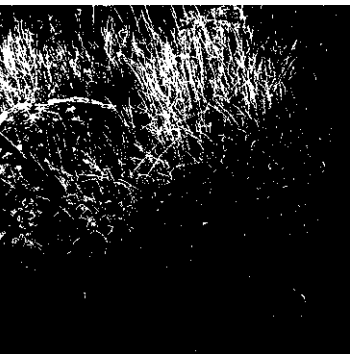


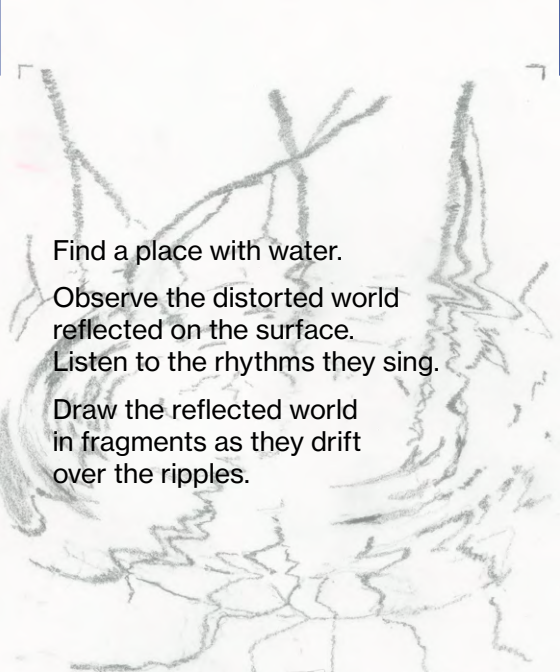
"SHAKING SPAGHETTI WITH
BOLOONESE SAUCE"
"MAKING KIMCHI"

THE SOUND OF FALLEN
LEAVES CRUNCHING



"REACHING INSIDE A BAG OF CRISPS"





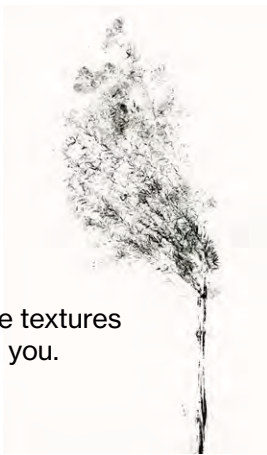
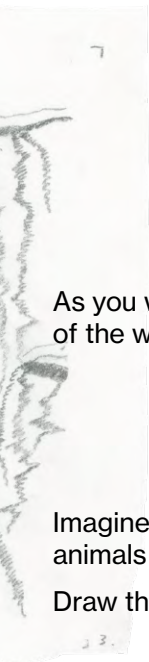
Find a place with water.

Observe the distorted world
reflected on the surface.

Listen to the rhythms they sing.

Draw the reflected world
in fragments as they drift
over the ripples.

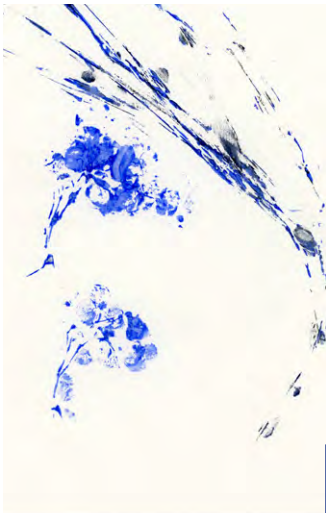




As you walk, feel the textures of the world around you.

Imagine them as the skin of animals you've never seen before.

Draw the animal.



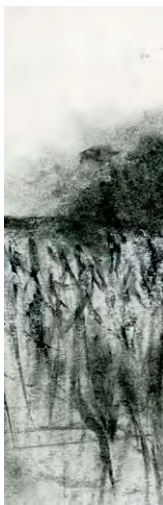


Sit under a tree canopy.

Watch
all
the
leaves
fall
from the
branches.

Imagine each leaf
is a star.

Draw their
constellations as they



f
a
/

frozen in your
memory.





Walk into a field of grass.

Watch the wind turn each field
into a swaying ocean. Observe
the singularity in a drop of grass,
amongst the unison of the field sea.

Holding a pencil,
sway to the rhythm of the wind.





Sense your own time flow

RUI LIU photographer

I don't know if you feel the same way as I do: The flow of time is always changing. Time seems to be relatively short when I'm having fun with my friends or browsing my cell phone, and sometimes it feels so long when I'm alone. But relatively speaking, it's the time alone that gives me more space to think. Instead, I enjoy these slow moments that seem to be stretched out. Without something to respond to, I can focus more on myself and spread my thoughts to any corner I can reach.

As a photographer, I am accustomed to using images as a means to record my life, and the photos I take are my perspective on how I see the world. For example, I like natural things, so when I walk on the street or in the park, my eyes are naturally attracted to trees and clouds. These things can be found everywhere, but they are fascinating in different ways. For example,



the branches of different kinds of trees have different thicknesses and textures, and the branches grow in different directions. With the change of seasons and the change of weather, even the same plant will take on a different appearance, perhaps just sprouting one day, and then in full bloom the next day when you pass by, which is something you need to observe carefully and pay attention to in order to notice. Walking, on the other hand, provides a much wider space for such observation, in which you don't need to deliberately focus your attention on a certain place or direction, but just walk with your heart, and you can naturally find many interesting surprises.

The prompts I give are more open, and I hope I can give readers more space for imagination. For example, imagine the flavor of clouds, etc. At the same time, I encourage readers to explore more traces of nature, and to let vibrant plants serve as a compass for walking directions, rather than road signs and electronic navigation.



Breathe in. Breathe out.

Breathe in. Breathe out.
Breathe in. Breathe out.

Feel the air flowing between
your lips and teeth.

Sink into the world of concentration.

Can you re-sense the flow of time?



Watch the sky.

Which cloud is your favorite?

Stop every 10 minutes and record the cloud you like in your favorite way.

Is it still your favorite cloud at the time? If so, how

has its color and shape changed?

If not, how is it different from previously recorded clouds?



If it's a sunny day,
walk in the direction of the shadow
until the sun sets

If it's a sunny day,
look at the direction of the clouds
in the sky.

Walk in that direction and watch for
changes in the direction of
the clouds.





Find a favorite tree nearby.

Observe its branches as much as possible.

Which of its branches is the strongest?

Follow the direction it grows. When you get lost, repeat this step.



How to measure time by walking
Let your thoughts fly
Follow the bricks and seep
into the soil

Climb the clouds and fly to the sky. In this

time, thicken the thickness of time and experience the texture of time.



How could one deepen the concentration of

moment, we are time, and our breath and steps are the trajectory of time



**your
walks**

