

An Exeter Mis-Guide

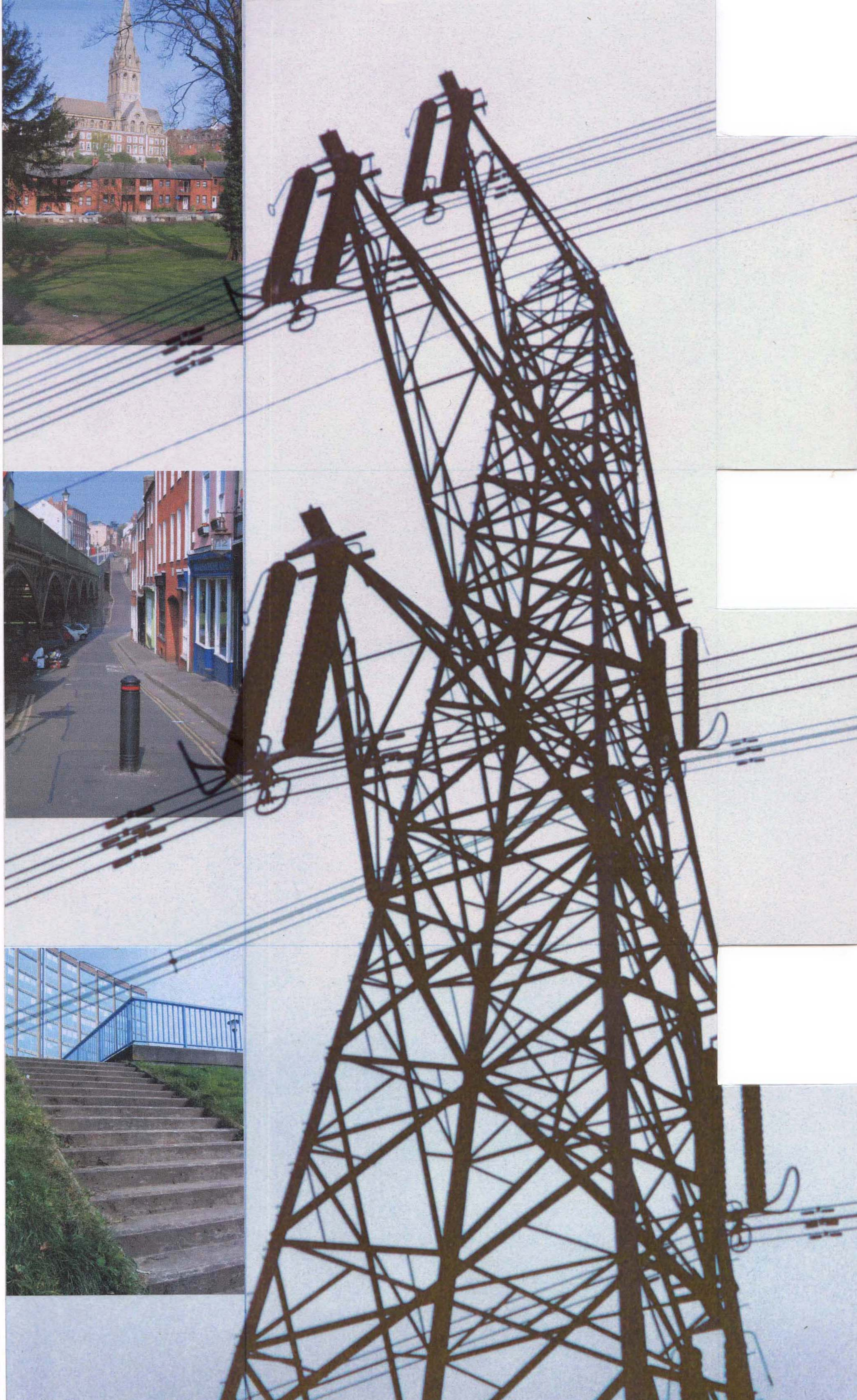
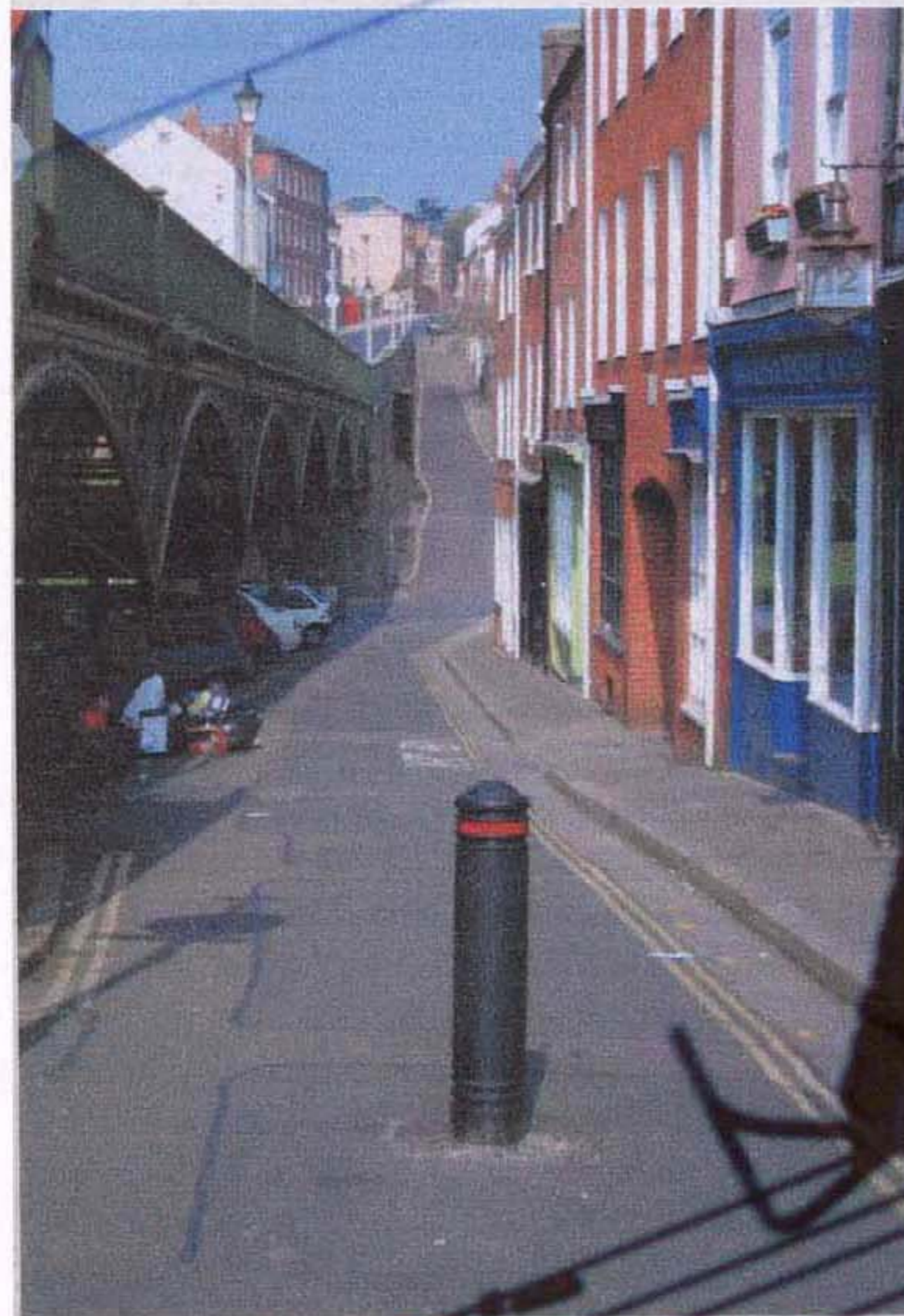
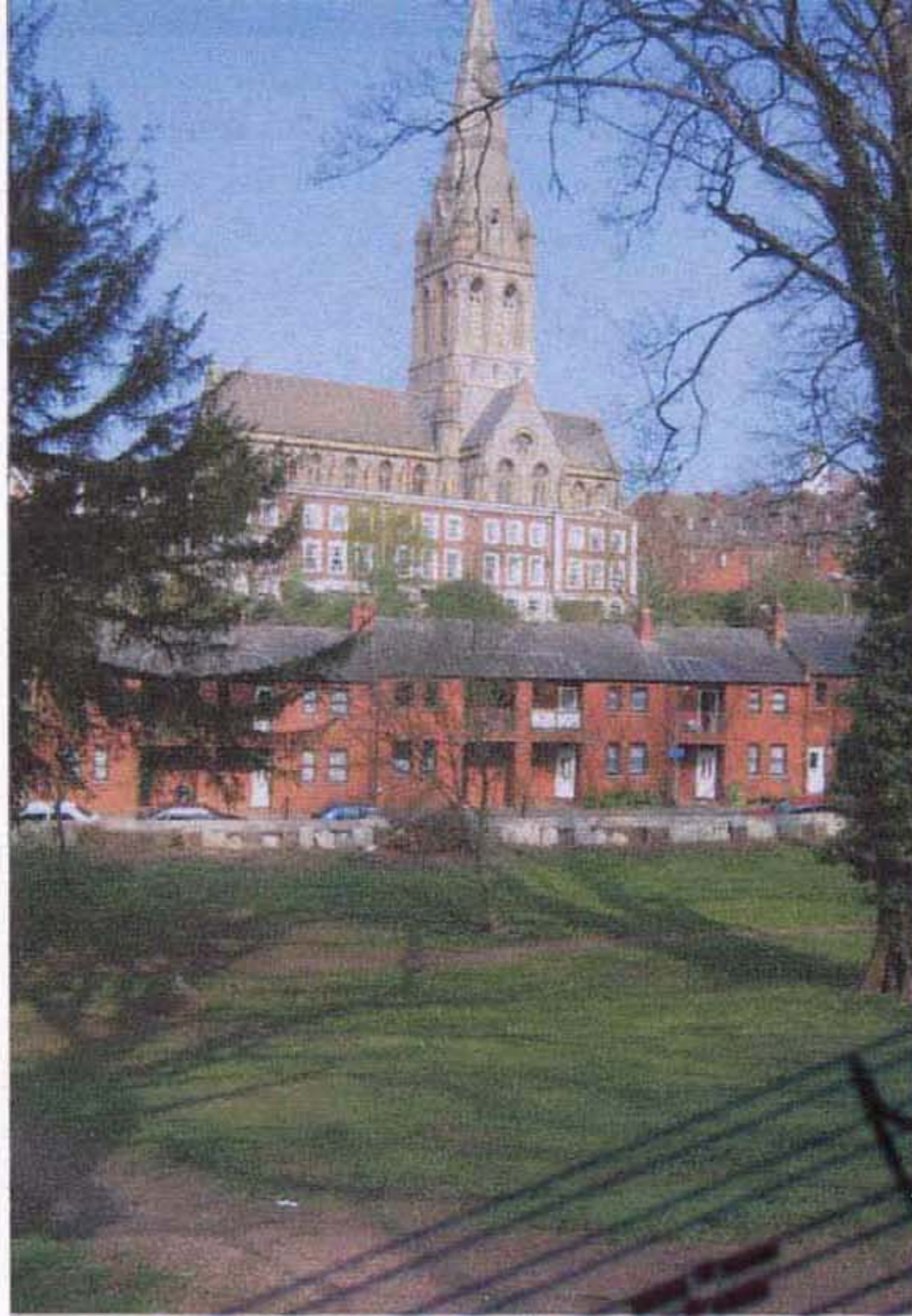
Introduction: Are you misguided?

What's different about this Guide to Exeter? Well, it's not just for tourists, for one thing. Instead it is for everybody to play at being a tourist - or an explorer, an archaeologist, a spy, a fugitive ... you choose. Whatever part you play this is a mis-guide to seeing and exploring the unfamiliar in Exeter (even in the places you know well).

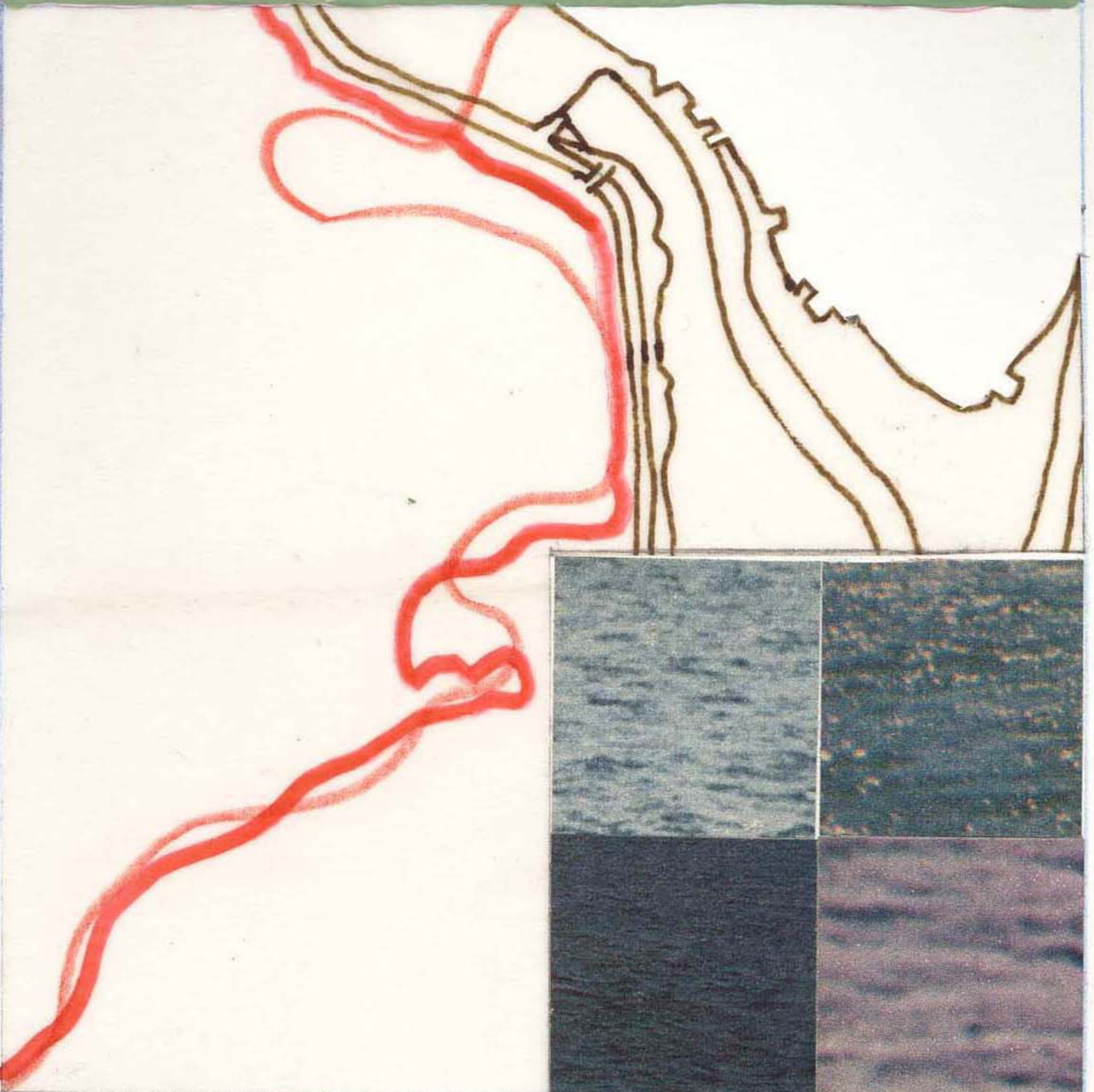
But even in play the cars hurt you just as much as in the routine, maybe more. So, look left, look right, look deeper.

Etiquette

When you walk through the crowds on Exeter High Street - in fact when you walk anywhere - your brain doesn't 'see' all the details of buildings or people you pass. The world's too full of complicated things for your brain to deal with them all consciously. What you actually 'see' is an "optic flow" - the important patterns and details, the crucial information such as 'can I step over that?' Or 'is that too steep?' Next time you're walking down the High Street use your "optic flow" to enjoy the patterns of buildings and people eddying and rushing by. Use the flow to greet or swerve, anticipate, nod, smile and veer - enjoy yourself as you finesse the etiquette of walking with, against, towards and across your fellow citizens.



FACING PAGE MARGIN



water walk

a waterside walk for two people along the river exe bisecting the city

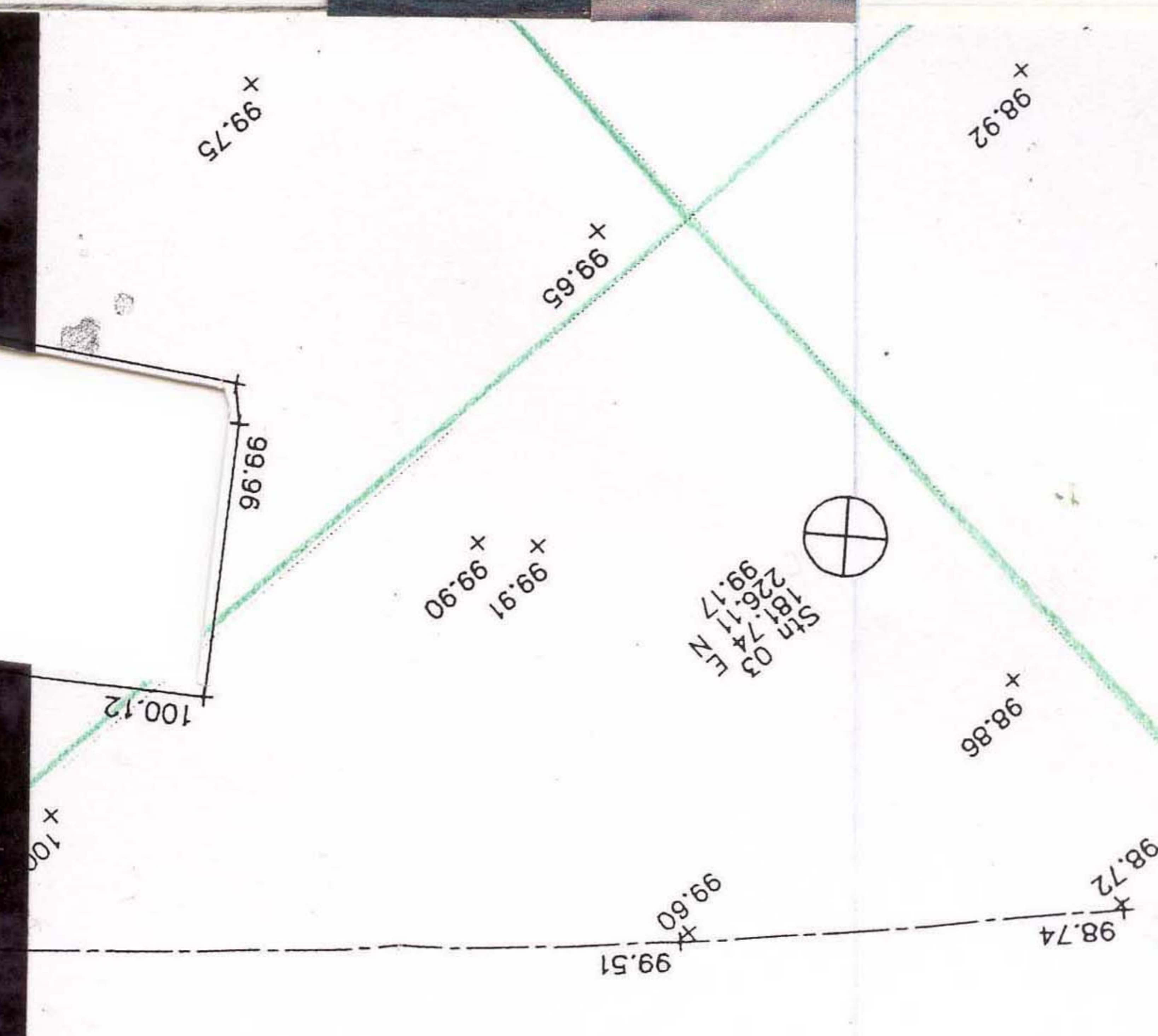
start near exwick mills, to the north of the city
end near topsham, to the south-east of the city

this walk has 2 rules:

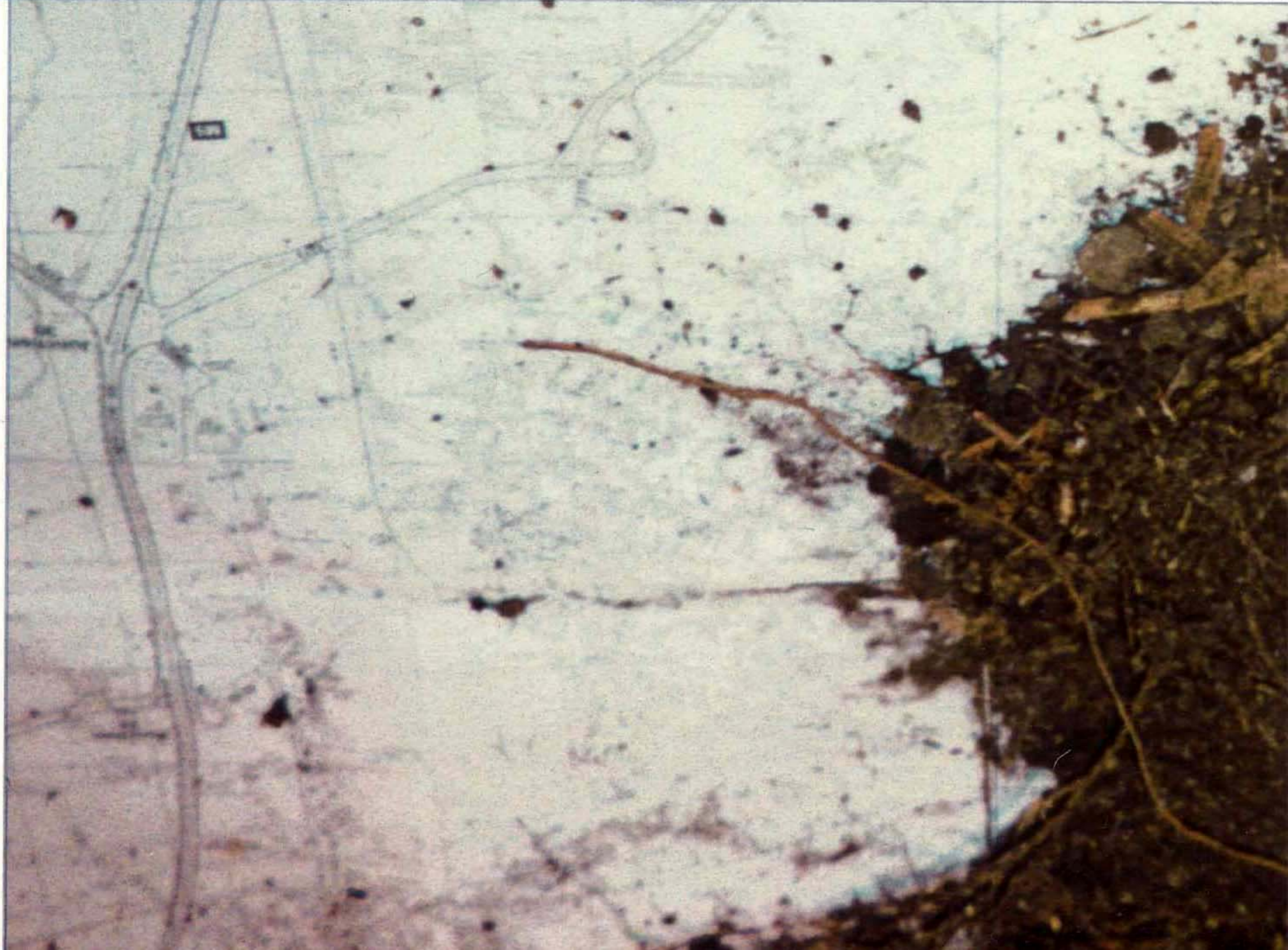
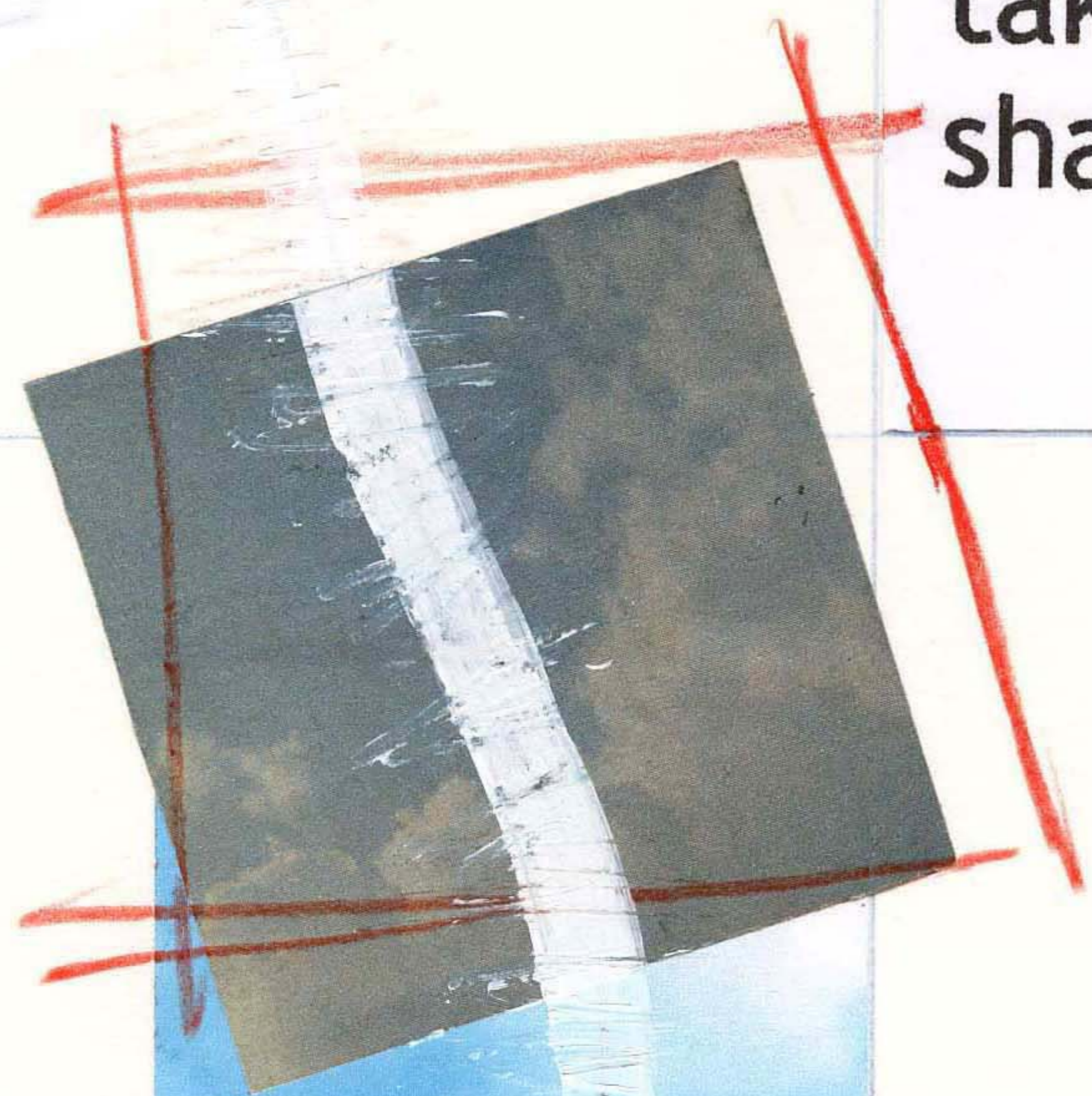
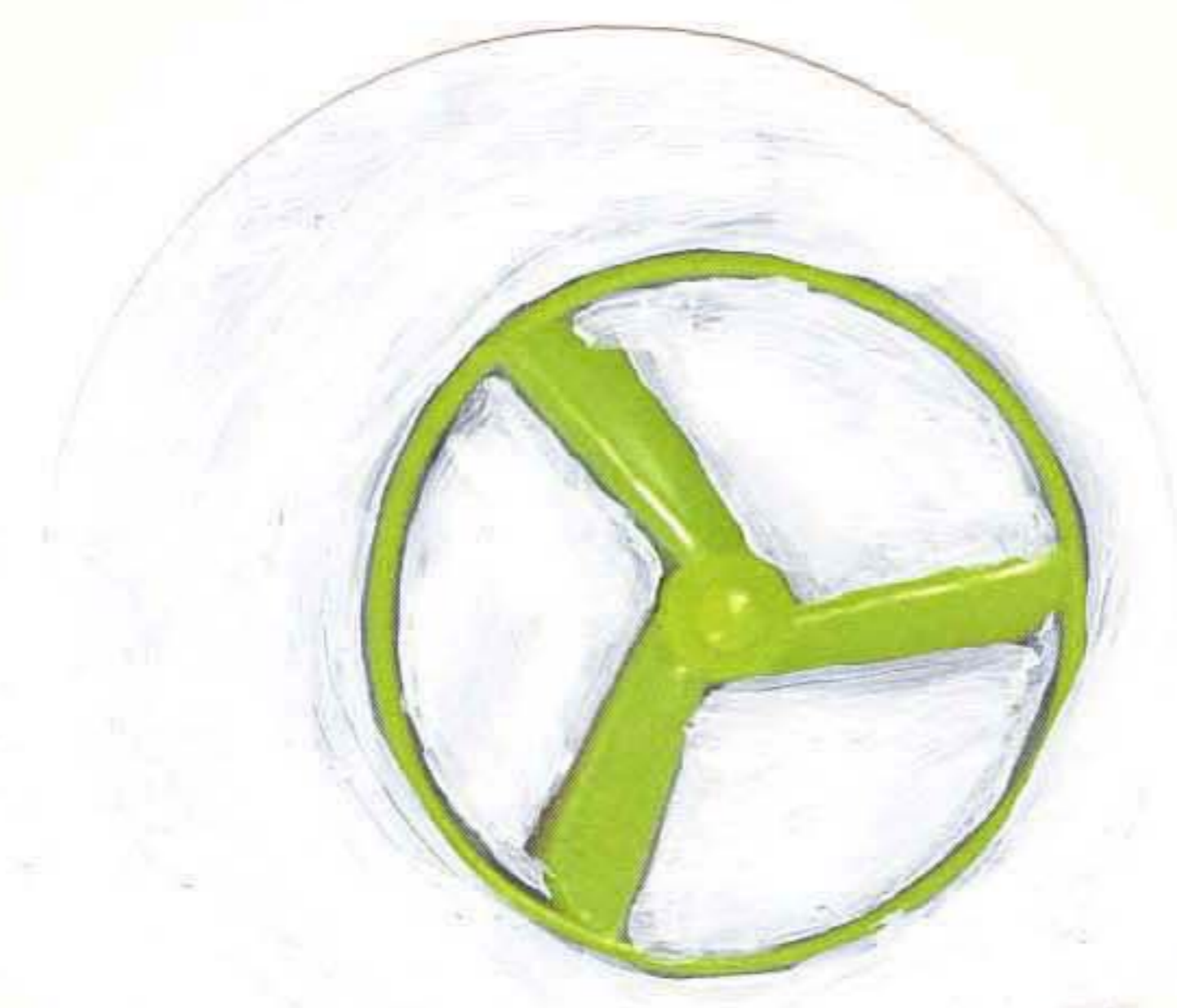
- walk on opposite sides of the river to each other
- maintain contact with each other at all times

possible ways of maintaining contact:

- sight
- voice
- mobile or public telephones
- semaphore
- flares



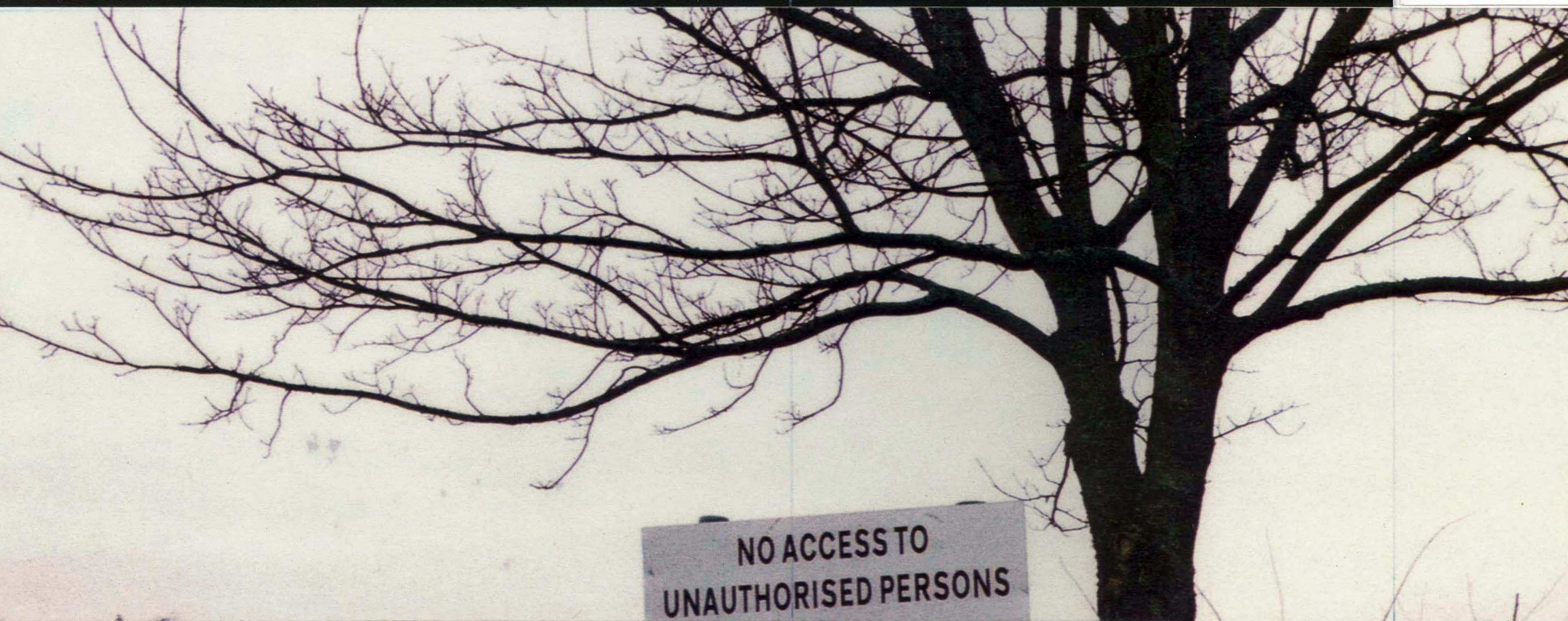
As you drift the city
looking for places, let
your feelings guide
you. As you get used to
travelling this way you
may find atmospheres
take recognisable
shape in the city.

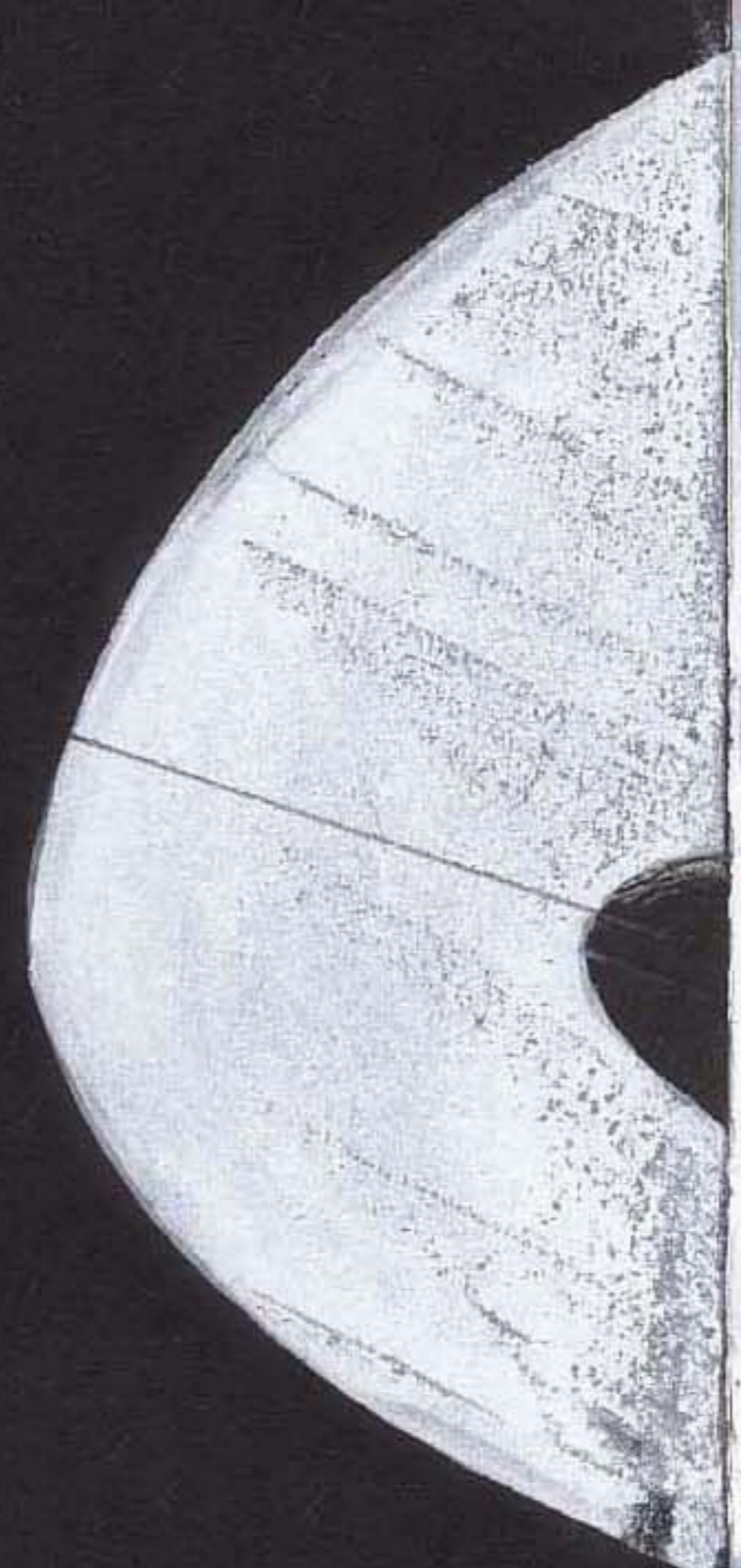
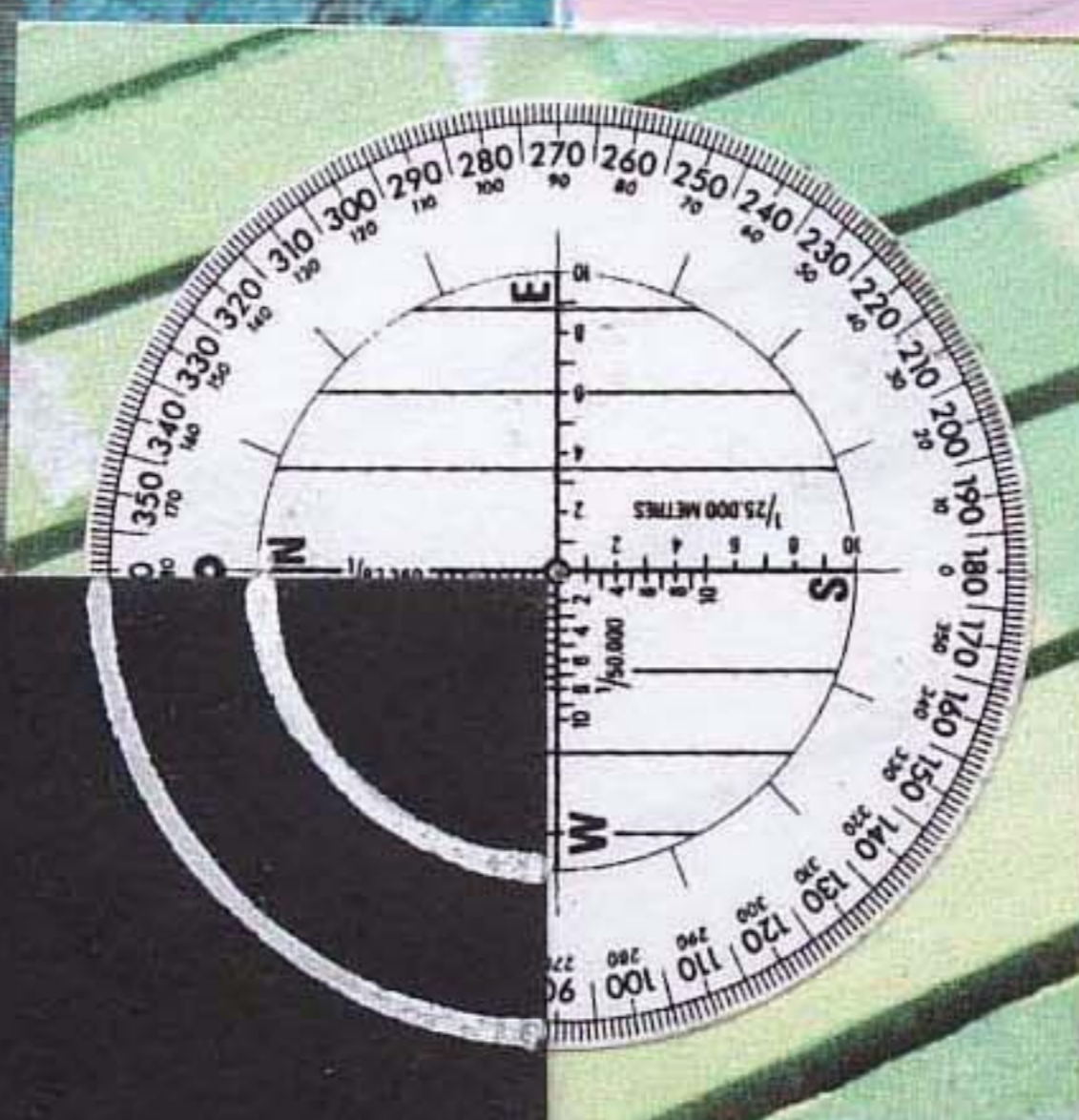
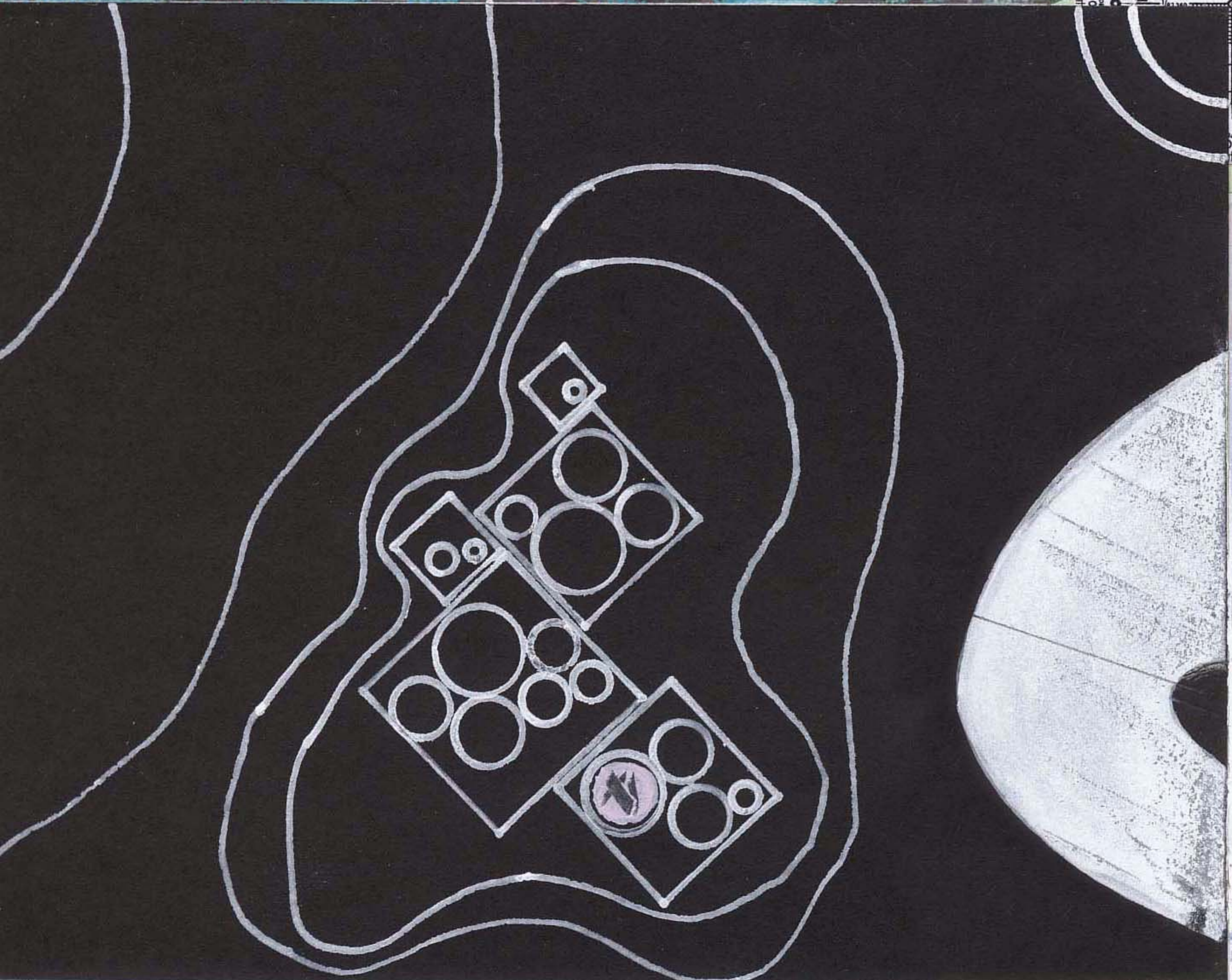
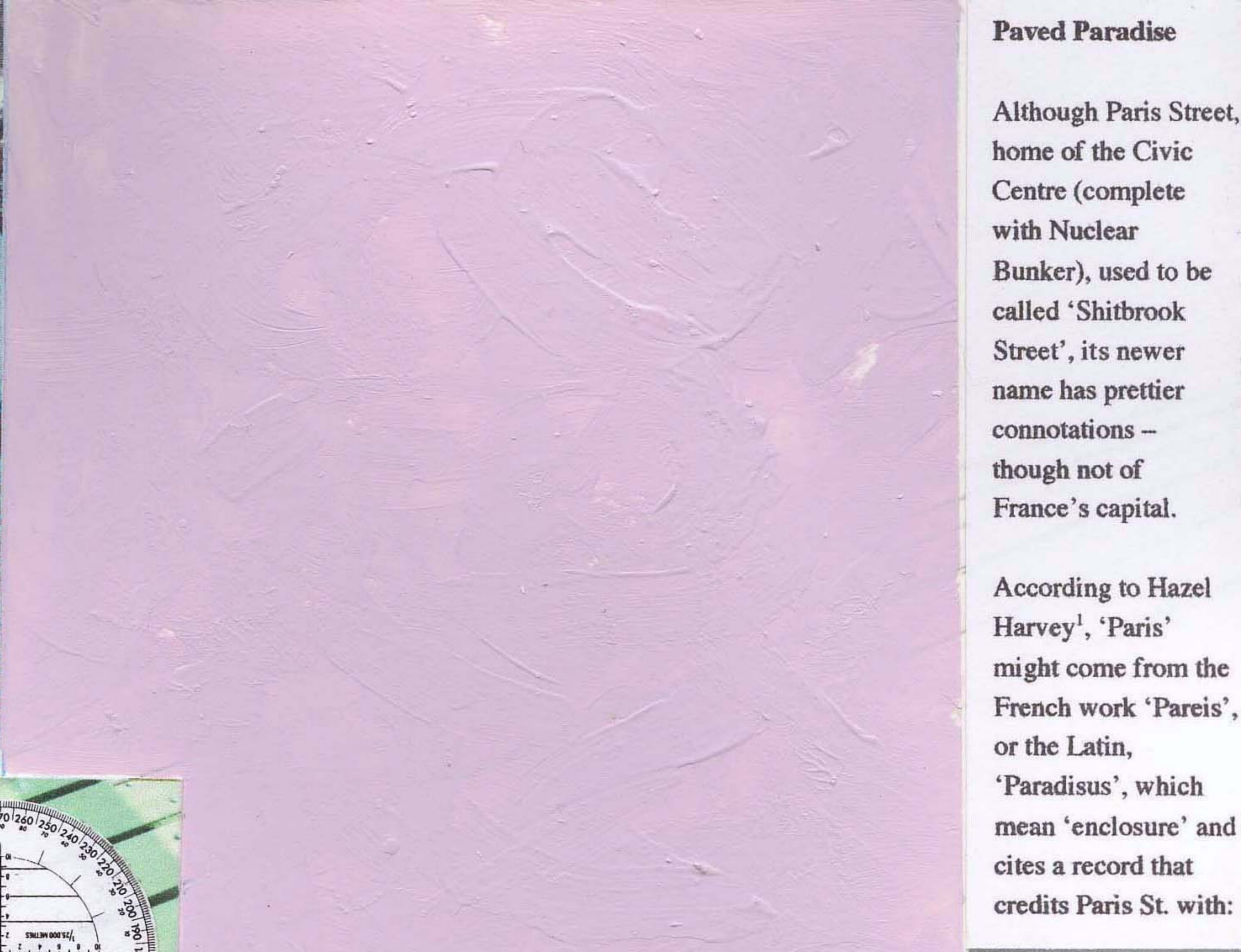


Dread places



Bleak spaces where the absence of friendly detail can suddenly give a feeling of coming face to face with something else - maybe everything else. People have been known to Pan-ic in these places, turn and run. The place may be a lane or a path that turns off into the unseen. It may be a derelict or emptied space where other things seem to come rushing in. You can learn to love the feeling: dread places are where you can get a feeling for the future, for just how big "possible" is.





Paved Paradise

Although Paris Street, home of the Civic Centre (complete with Nuclear Bunker), used to be called 'Shitbrook Street', its newer name has prettier connotations – though not of France's capital.

According to Hazel Harvey¹, 'Paris' might come from the French work 'Pareis', or the Latin, 'Paradisus', which mean 'enclosure' and cites a record that credits Paris St. with:



'A Garden Called Paradys'

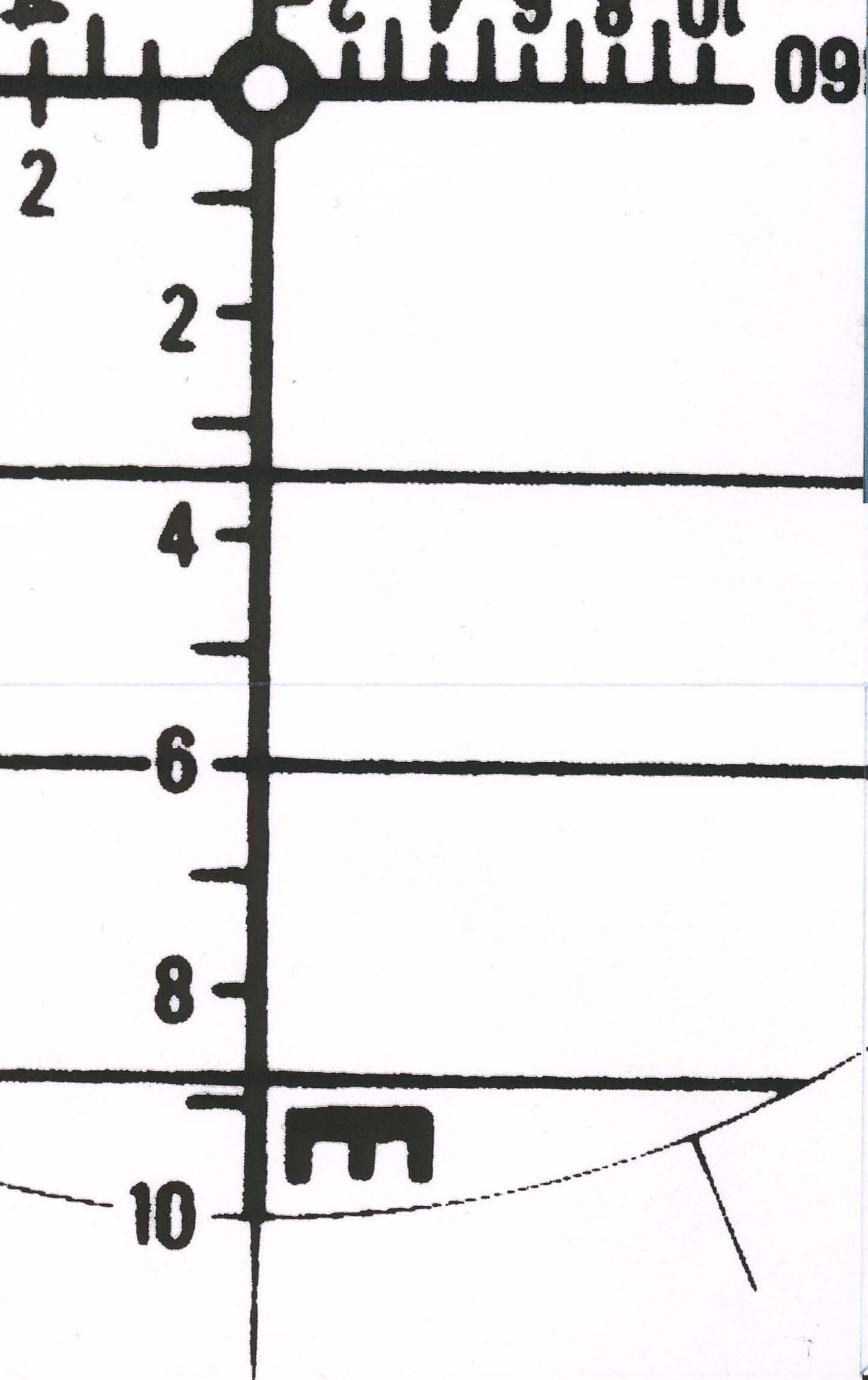
Find the place where you think the garden might have been, or where lovers might best tryst nowadays. Place a red rose to mark the spot (the rent for this garden in the 13th century).



TOUCH TOURS

You may walk down a particular street everyday but only feel it through your shoes. What kinds of information, sensations, associations arise by touching the familiar walls and fabric of the city? It might seem odd to stop to touch-tour your journey but it can be done momentarily without drawing attention to your actions. This tour could be taken on any walk (you can invent your own route) but I have chosen the High Street because it is such a public place to encounter this private experience.





'to walk a line is the easiest thing a human being can do to put his [her] mark on a place' – Richard Long

Compass Walk

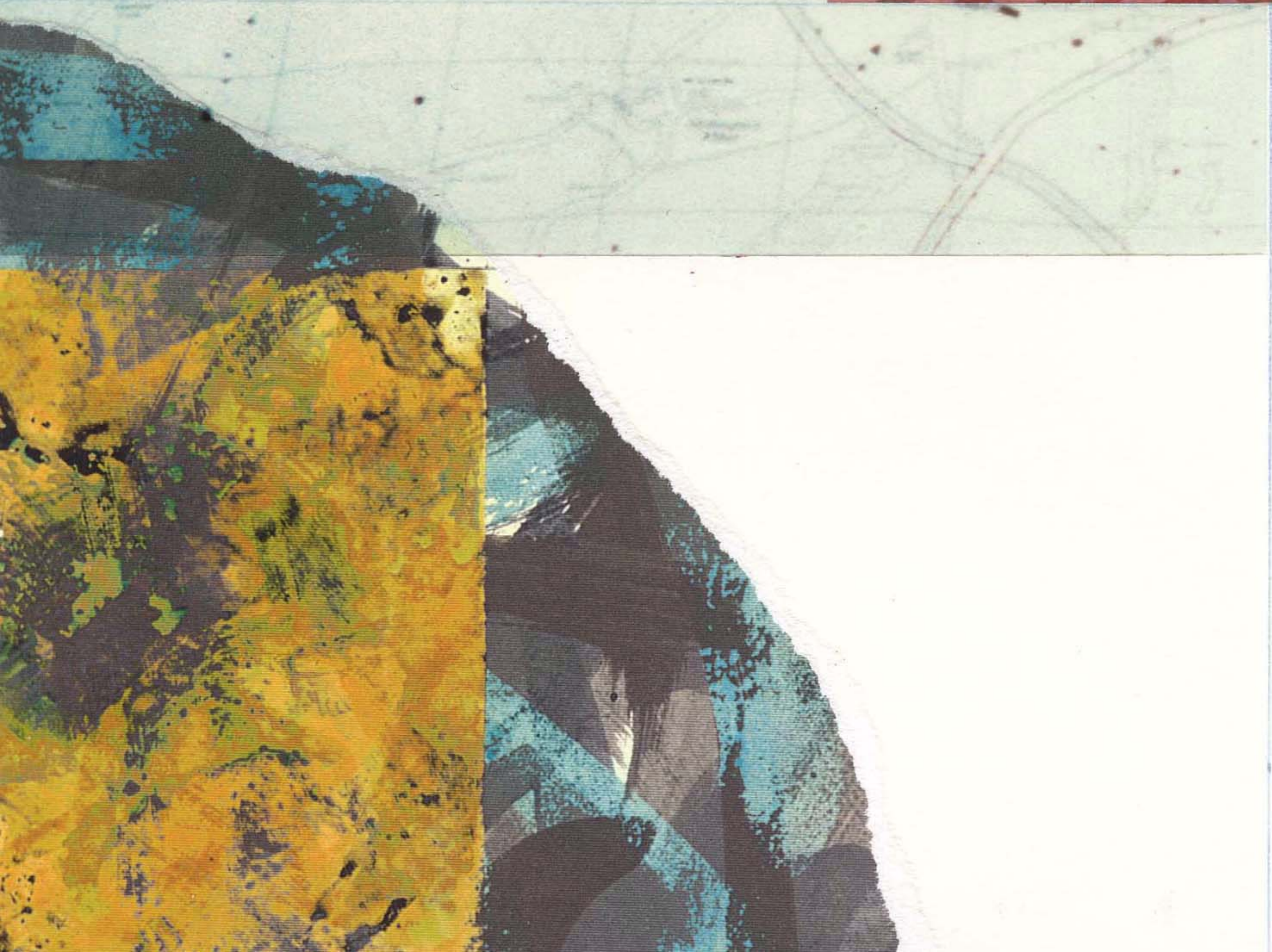
Get a compass

Choose:

- a starting point, perhaps somewhere in west avenue
- a compass course
- a length of time to walk for

walk for the chosen period of time in the chosen direction

do your utmost not to deviate from your course



Reverse Archaeology

Look for ruins on which the future can be built. Fallen branches, metal rubbish, waste and dump can all be turned. Make your own statue, make your own thing. Erect a monument to a fictional event.

Imagine new areas of the city, make maps of them.

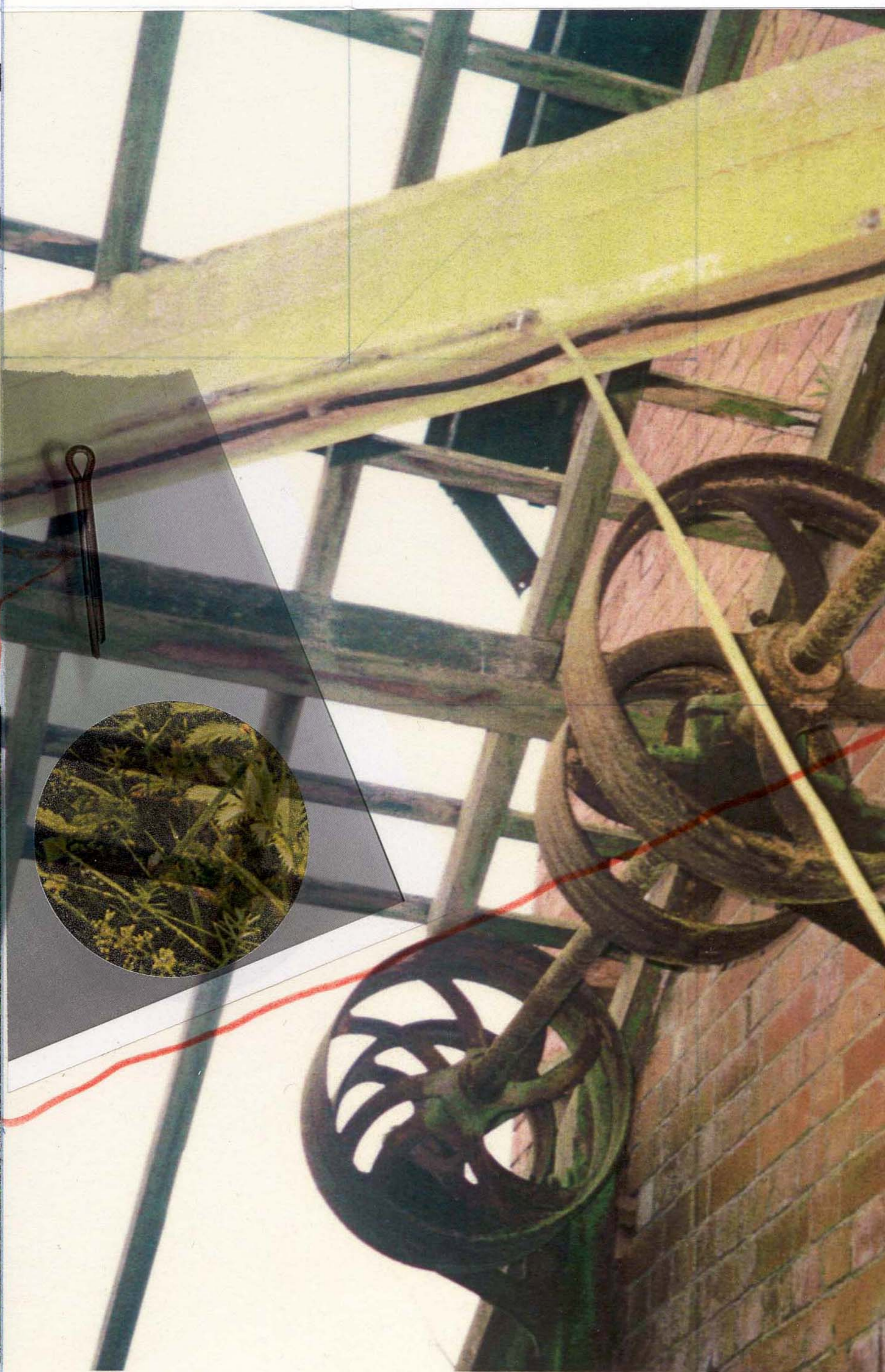
Make a Bizarre Quarter, a Nostalgic Quarter, a Sinister Quarter, a Cheeky Quarter, whatever Quarter you want ... start with a single existing fragment of a place and build a whole Quarter from it.

Rural Relic, Urban Reliquary

Look for the city in the country and the country in the city. Exeter is full of patches of green, old country lanes and paths, even near the centre of the city – every time we drift through the city we swiftly find ourselves hitting the country. But then, the country is as closely regulated as the city, in some ways. Can we keep these distinctions going?

Take a Polaroid camera and take pictures of what you find. Write the time and a fragment of text on them. This can relate to anything around you.

Place the pictures somewhere along your route.





Walk for exhibitionists or reality-tv-show would-bes

A walk along the high street, joining the large green municipal CCTV towers

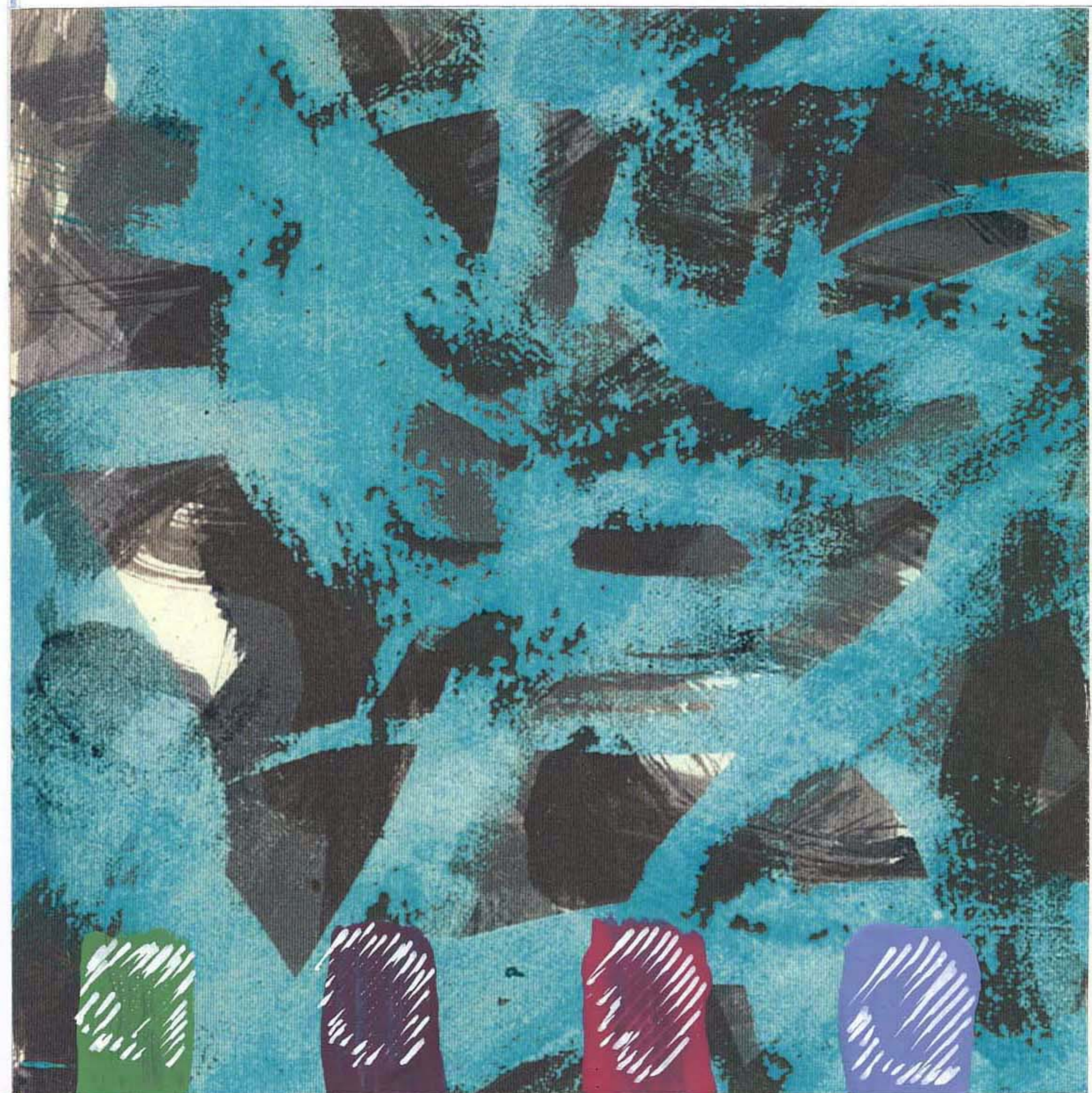
Start outside next

End at the top of fore street

As you walk keep your eyes peeled for as many cameras as possible

Potential tactics:

- put on your best clothes and make-up
- create a short routine to perform to the cameras
- show off as much as possible
- 'make love' to the cameras
- construct a placard with a message for an anonymous viewer on it and show it to the cameras

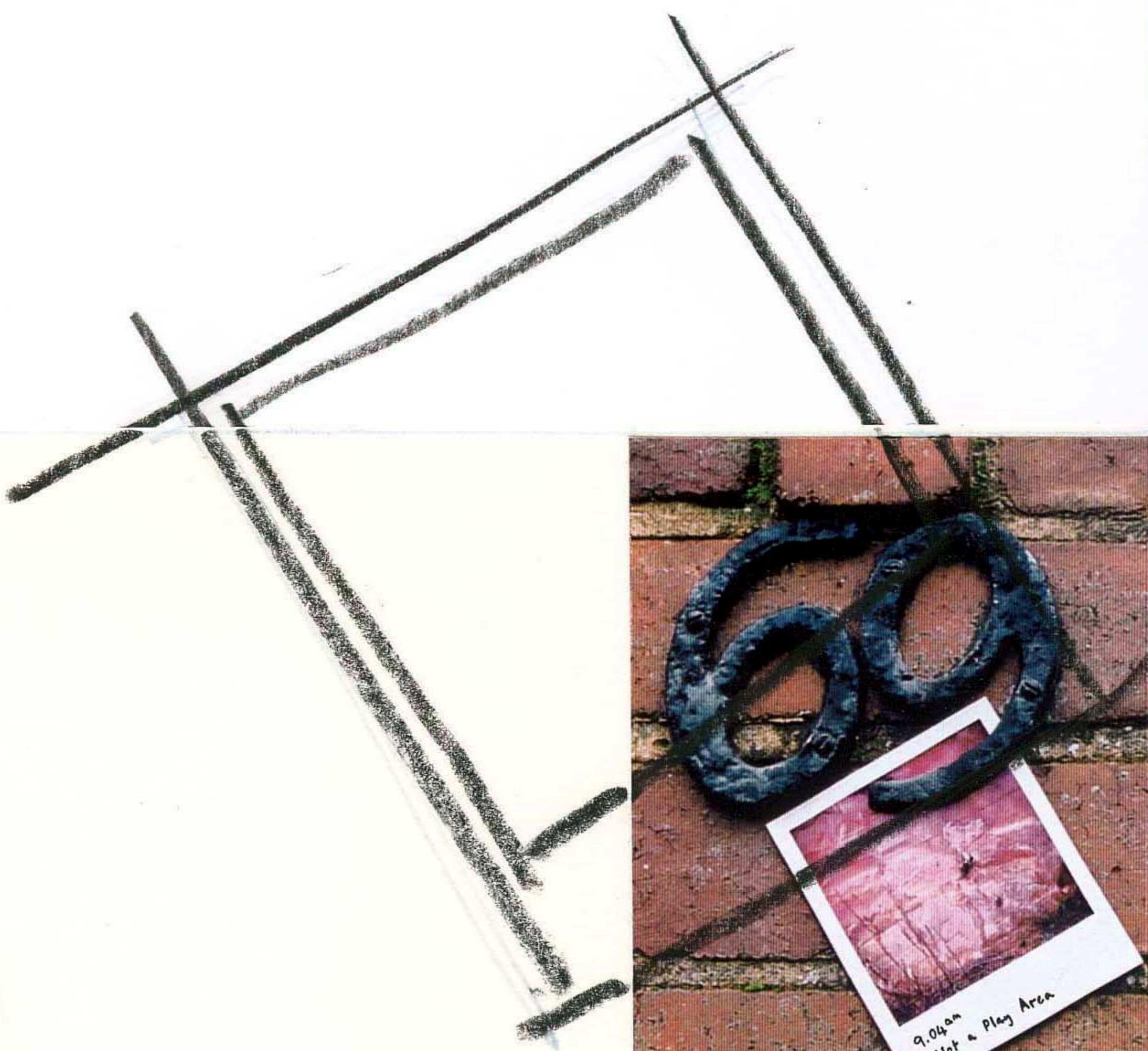


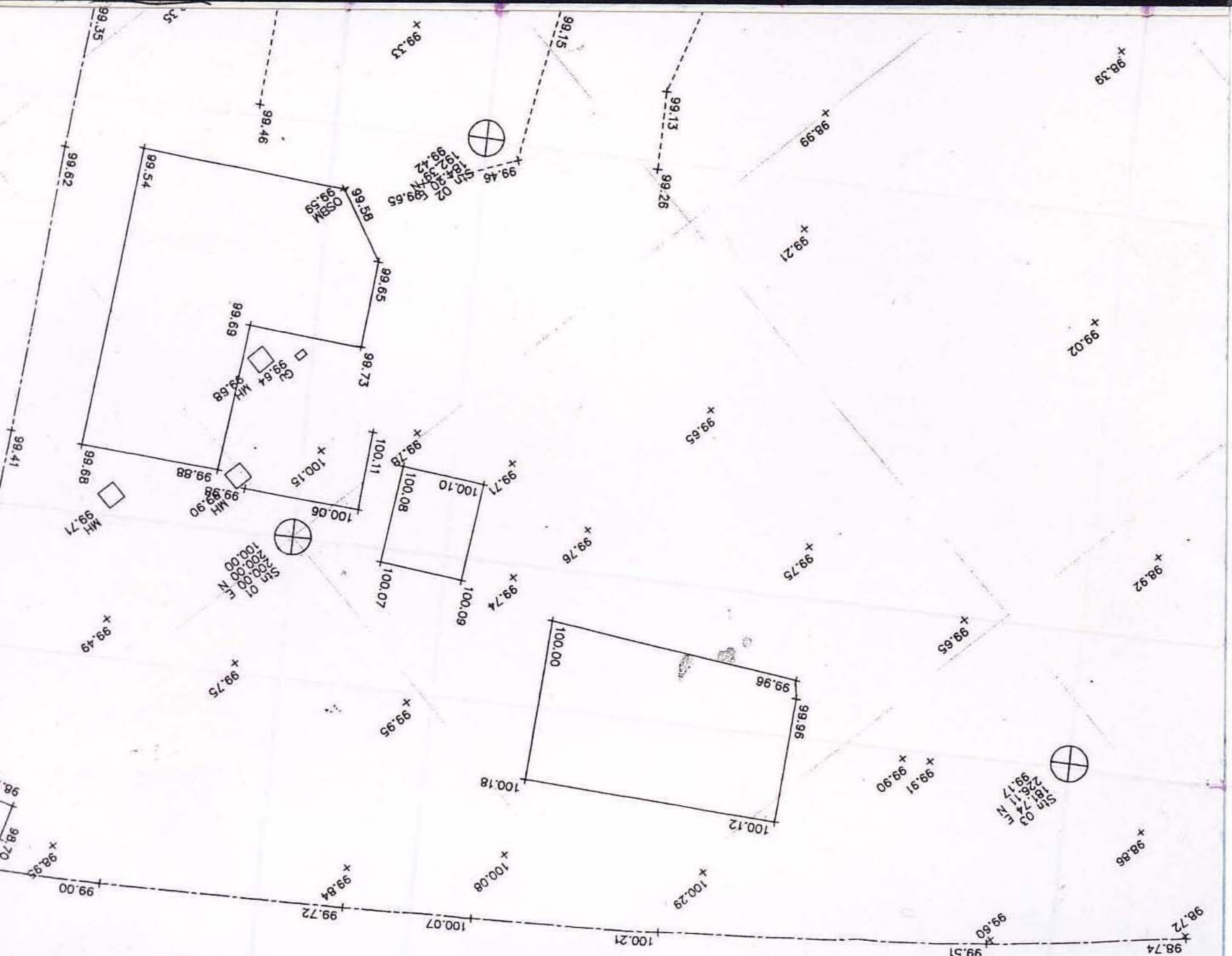
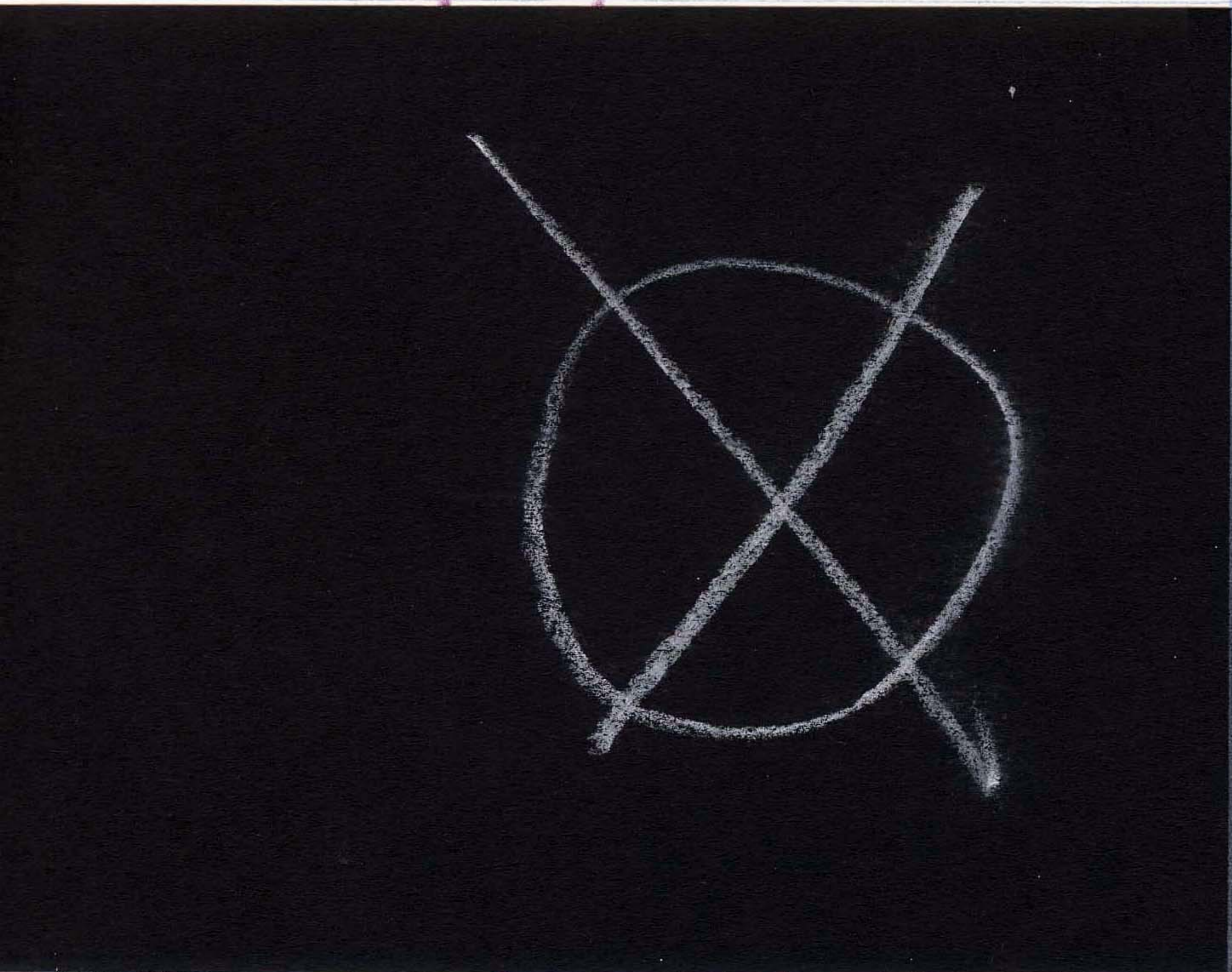
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Nostalgic Drift (for those who know Exeter well)

Revisit scenes from your past and see how they're getting along without you. Look into the back gardens of houses you used to inhabit. Commemorate in chalk special places on the pavement where you said 'Goodbye' or had a memorable conversation, or kissed. Lay a wreath on the site of a memory you want to put to rest.

Anywhere you can walk slowly down the street without being shot at by Western contractors. Anywhere you can reorganise buildings without permission. Anywhere you can stand still without being questioned.

Anywhere you find abandoned beds. Anywhere the movie you always wanted to see is playing. Anywhere you legged it.

A Mis-Guide to Anywhere is a utopian project for the recasting of a bitter world by disrupted walking. Mis-Guides are your travel documents for your destinationless journeys. Mis-Guidance is a walk in the park.



A **mis-GUIDE** to ANYWHERE

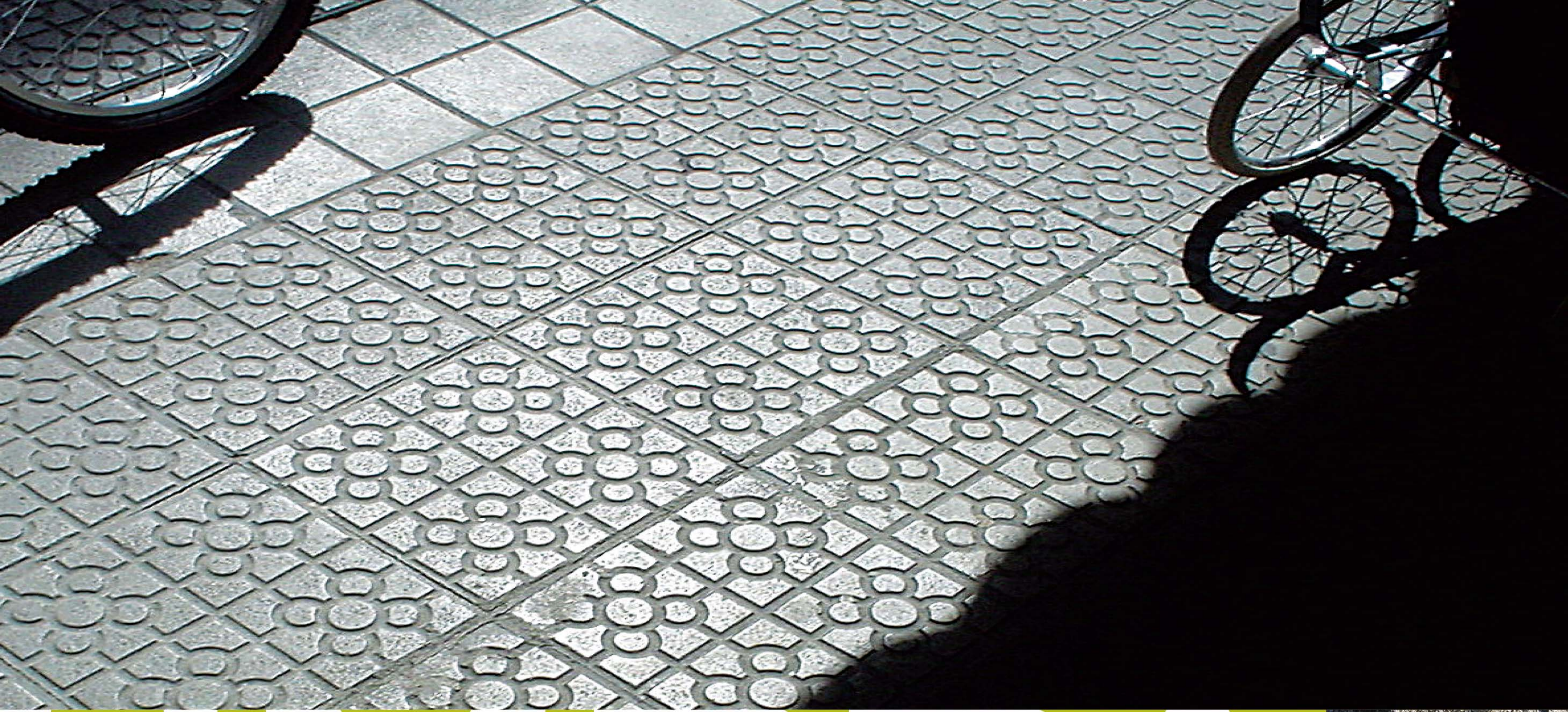
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Follow your shadow.

Repeat at different times of day and year, and at different distances from the equator.



WE APOLOGISE FOR ANY
INCONVENIENCE...



Most cities are in a constant state of change. This is clearly marked by roadworks as underground services are updated or installed. Such work is generally regarded as an inconvenience. On a mis-guided walk it can be seen in a different light. A hole in the city provides a chance to peer into the historical and geological layers of the place. In this way, you could consider the roadworks as a free open-air exhibition of earthworks and archaeological revelations.

OUT OF PLACE



In researching this book we have explored a number of tactics for transplanting ideas arising from one place to another, including a simultaneous drift by the four core members of Wrights & Sites in four European locations.

Exchange mis-guided ideas in real-time with people in other places.

Build a narrative over the course of a day by sending one photo message per hour to a friend.

The idea of superimposing one space (or time) onto another is not a new one:

- as Walter Benjamin wrote: 'we know that, in the course of flânerie, far-off times and places interpenetrate the landscape and the present moment'
- towards the end of 2003 a ferris wheel from Paris was re-erected in the centre of Birmingham - but the French audio commentary had not been removed, and for several weeks the public viewed the English cityscape whilst being told to look out for famous Parisian landmarks

What happens if you overlay a map of Moscow onto your own city? What do you find where the Kremlin should be? Look for references to Russia. Stop in bars and drink vodka.

What about Baghdad?...

Or fictional spaces? (Narnia, streets in soap operas, etc.)

Take guidebooks from one place and use them in another. Exchange maps with friends from other cities.

Needed:

- Alcopops
- Map, compass, whistle, GPS
- Thermal blankets, mittens and wellies
- Horse-shoes, L-plates and bunny ears

CROSS-COUNTRY WALK FOR A HEN PARTY

To be done at night.

Fall out of a taxi onto a dark road. Watch it drive away.
Set out across country.

Dazzle on a footpath; dance between pine trees.
Watch the bride-to-be shimmy on a rock.
Strut your stuff by a lake; stumble into a fairy ring.
Make cat-calls at cattle, make sheep's eyes at sheep,
moon at the moon.
Walk the shape of a broken heart.
Kiss a frog.
Tell tales.
Lie in a hollow and play a game of truth.
Smoulder through kissing-gates.
Vow eternal friendship and quarrel
and make up and drink to the shadows and ghosts and
quarrel and make up
and shout at the stars.

Breakfast at dawn in a transit café.
Re-enter the city: a rite of passage.





NATURE WALK

Look for the non-human.

Maps drawn by slugs. Foxes cutting through gardens.
Cats winking from car roofs. Birds nesting in porches.
Hedgehogs halting traffic. Spiders redecorating empty
houses. A continent in mildew.



THE PROBLEM OF SHOPPING

Can shopping ever be a mis-guide activity?

The flâneuse, the female drifter, was first legitimized as a consumer in department stores. So is her drifting continually recuperated into consumer flows? What is the dreamscape of unmotivated window-shopping? Benjamin writes of the day-dreaming wanderer of the Paris Arcades (themselves prototype department stores), 'Flâneurie is the rhythmic of this slumber.' But the flâneur of either sex is an ambivalent and passive figure.

Those who leave their packaging at the check-out resist the chilly order of the supermarket. On No Shopping Day, two people dressed as doctors handed out leaflets warning San Francisco shoppers of 'affluenza' and 'shopaholicism'. Next year they plan to inoculate. Others dressed as consumer sheep or offered to cut up credit cards. But these marvellous activities seem to lack the sense of discovery necessary to mis-guidance.

You might regard the window displays as a city-wide picture-book and see what stories they have to tell. Or you might try on clothes for a different person (older, richer, poorer, fatter, interested in windsurfing). Or swap shopping lists with a friend from another country. Or make a tour of shop assistants and give an award to the one you like best (or set your own criteria). You might buy small gifts as presents for the city, to be left on benches and in doorways. Or contact an old school friend and walk around the shops you toured as children. Or try out shopping in a motorized buggy. You might sight-see in shops or market places where you cannot conceive of buying... I remember sitting for hours in a Spanish market full of stamps, old medals, caged birds, and books written in Castellano.



HOMETOWN

Return to your hometown. Perhaps with a childhood friend.
Or, if you have one, your own child. Visit old haunts:
houses, streets, schools, playgrounds, secret dens.
Retrace old walks.

Then return to the city where you now live. Use your
hometown experience to discover new ways of walking
the city. New places to hang out in.





Z Worlds (self-contained universe in a small space)



pylons (the path of souls)



mythogeographical faultlines (routes of ideas)



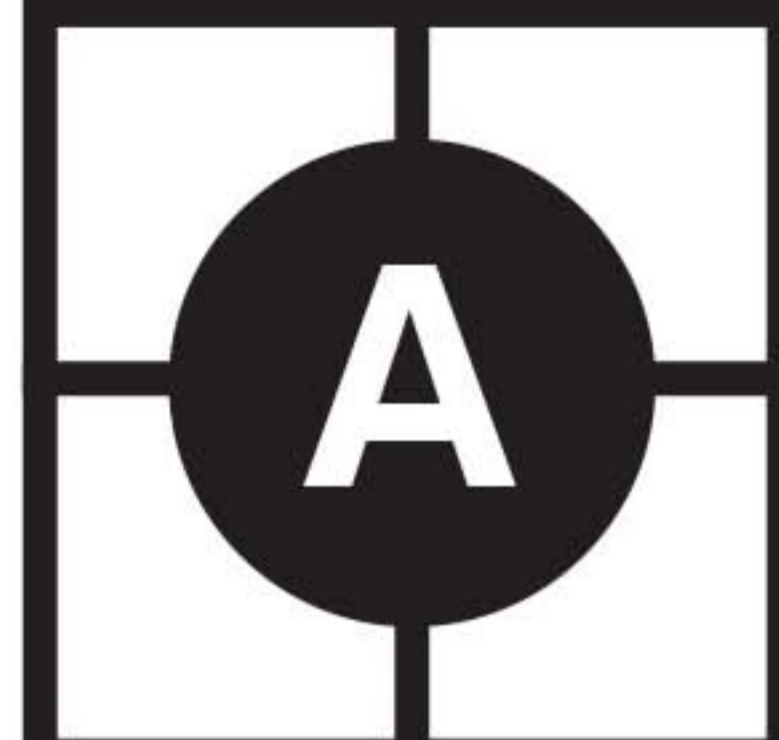
dread places (where unidentifiable anxiety accompanies possibilities)



new menhirs (nomadic architecture, bollards, gateposts, etc.)



dreamscape (abandoned bedsteads and mattresses)



ambient hubs (where differences meet)



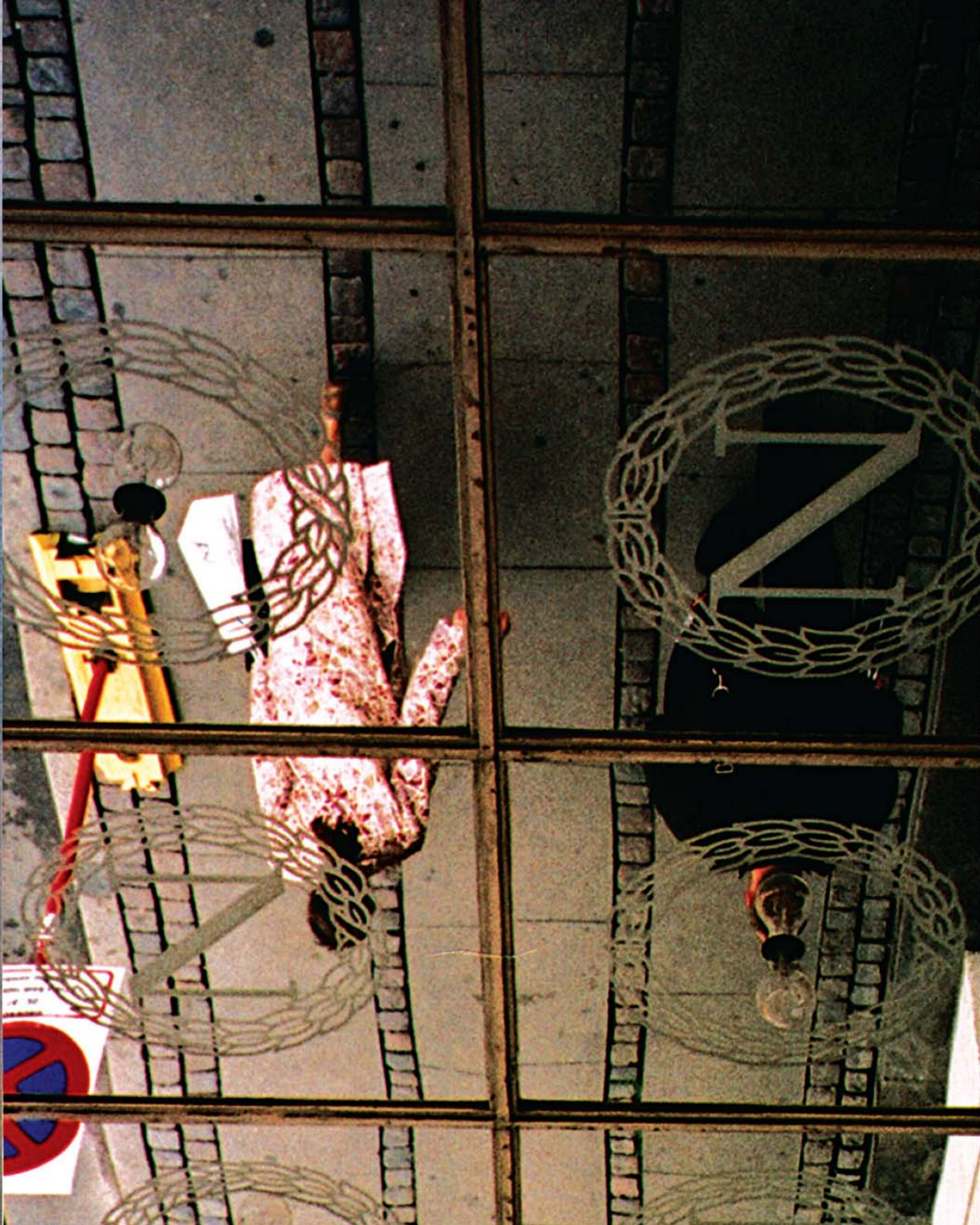
opportunities for constructed situations (revolutionary playgrounds)



plaques tournants (your choice of direction changes everything)



wormholes (metaphorical tunnels to other places)



Make a map of your city - chart interconnecting film locations, mark routes between areas of intense atmosphere and the appearances of fictional characters, draw in the faultlines where streams of subterranean ideas come to the surface, trace any cracks in the panorama, use diagrams to describe the orbits of rumours and friendships, sketch in your dreams.

Here are a few international symbols for mythogeographical mapping.

Some commercial mapmakers draw non-existent streets onto their maps, so they can tell if their maps have been plagiarised. Invent a new street. Pass your maps around.





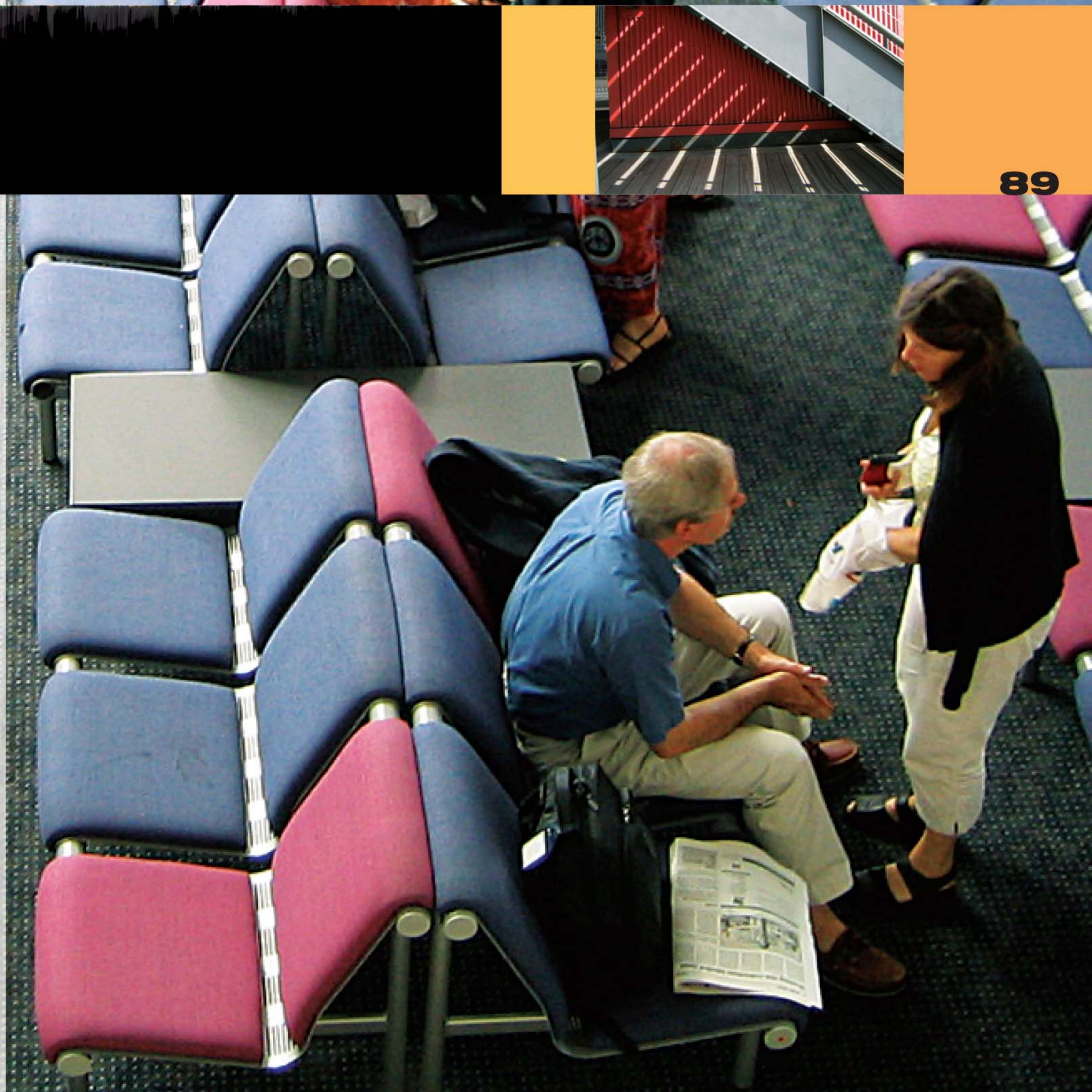
PLACE/ NON-PLACE

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According to Marc Augé, some places are 'non-places'. We pass through these non-places like ships passing in the night; we don't communicate; we don't become attached. They are the places of 'supermodernity' and they include: motorways, airports, theme parks, anonymous hotels, shopping malls, department stores and tourist spaces.

Make a non-place into a place. Look for the particular that marks this space as lived. Chat to someone who works here. Discover a landmark view. Site-see any spots where a media event has occurred. Find something very old. Discover reminders of home. Arrange to meet a friend. Take them on a tour.





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A WALK FOR CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN

'There is one book I've always dreamt of finding, but it doesn't exist, so perhaps I should write it myself. It would be a travel guide, but one that captured the essence of a place by telling you exactly where to go to feel as if you'd lived there for years and loved living there because of x, y and z... I love travelling and I dream when I'm travelling, but I'm not travelling in order to dream. What's important to me is what I see and what I feel when I am there - the reality of the places I visit.' (Christian Louboutin)

In a place that is new to you, dream that you live there. Go on a quest to find this other self. Find the place you live; the place you work; the routes you take to see your family; the places where your friends hang out; your favourite places to eat or read or daydream; the places of crisis in this other life; the points of meeting and departure; the places of grief; the places of joy; the place where you can get the best plain cotton pillowcases; the place where you can pick fruit from the trees; the place where you can get funny cards with the message spelled wrong; the place to go in the early hours after a party; the places where your children might be born and the place where you might die. Live this other life for a day.

Write your discoveries in clear, red ink (or black on red) on the bottom of the shoes you are wearing. Photograph the soles and send the photo to Christian Louboutin, 19, Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 75001, Paris.

'What purpose could such a fine sharp heel have other than to prove you could create the unreal from something real?'
(Christian Louboutin)

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**SWAP SHOES
WITH SOMEONE
ELSE - WALK A
MILE OR MORE**

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**FIND THE
WORLD
IN ONE STREET**