

'Launch of a new guidebook that can be used anywhere you choose'

A new kind of guidebook, ***A Mis-Guide To Anywhere***, was launched at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts in April 2006. Mindful of at least a few of the ironies, impossibilities, contradictions and perils present in its title, ***A Mis-Guide To Anywhere*** provides a number of provocations for reader-walkers to make their own exploratory journeys in whatever environment they choose: metropolis, home town, countryside, holiday destination... anywhere.

Three years in the making, and referencing walks undertaken in Shanghai, rural Zambia, Copenhagen, Barcelona, Manchester, Paris, the island of Herm, etc., ***A Mis-Guide To Anywhere*** provides an inspiration for destination-less travels, strategies for seeing the world in new ways through disrupted walking.

A Mis-Guide To Anywhere is the brainchild of Exeter-based Wrights & Sites, a group of four walking artists (Stephen Hodge, Cathy Turner, Simon Persighetti and Phil Smith) who are influenced by a range of nomadic practices, from psychogeography to experimental tourism. It has been created in collaboration with the visual artist Tony Weaver.

Phil Smith of Wrights & Sites said: "***A Mis-Guide To Anywhere*** is like no other guide you have ever used before. Rather than telling you where to go and what to see, it gives you the ways to see your city or environment that no one else has found yet. It suggests a series of walks and points of observation and contemplation within any town, city or landscape of your own choosing. Anywhere you can walk slowly down the street without being shot at by Western contractors. Anywhere you can fall asleep on your feet. Anywhere you can reorganise buildings without permission. Anywhere the movie you always wanted to see is playing. Unlike an ordinary guide book, it is guided by the practice of mythogeography, which places the fictional, fanciful, fragile and personal on equal terms with 'factual', municipal history. Author and walker become partners in ascribing significance to place."

In 2003 Wrights & Sites published *An Exeter Mis-Guide*. "'Mis-guide' tourism is the latest of all the forms of experimental tourism. And it has an unlikely home town: Exeter..." (*The Times*, 13 September 2003). Rather surprisingly, it gathered an international readership and is now taught in numerous theatre, fine art, geography and sociology departments in universities around the world. One of the walks from *An Exeter Mis-Guide* was also included in the *Lonely Planet Guide to Experimental Travel*. This widespread demand for the book and its use in cities like Bangalore, Melbourne and Washington inspired the making of ***A Mis-Guide To Anywhere***.

Other related work by Wrights & Sites has included a Three Minute Wonder film for Channel 4 (*Subverting The City: Mis-Guide To Milton Keynes*), numerous performances and mis-guided tours including their *Lost Tours* in Exeter, *Mind the MAP* in Zurich for Walk21 and *Urbis Mis-Guided* at Urbis, Museum of the City, in Manchester.

A Mis-Guide To Anywhere (ISBN: 0954613015) retails at £10. More details are available from <http://www.mis-guide.com/anywhere.html>

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Notes to editors

Wrights & Sites is a group of four practitioner-researchers committed to producing work that responds to space and place, and the people who live, work and play in diverse sites and landscapes. Formalised in 1997 and based in Exeter (UK), the four core members are Stephen Hodge, Simon Persighetti, Phil Smith & Cathy Turner.

Sections of reviews of ***A Mis-Guide To Anywhere***:

- "You'll never have to buy another guidebook again..." (The Times, 15 April 2006)
- "This wonderful little gem of a book is the latest from Wrights & Sites, who have taken theatre into everyday life, and breathed new life into theatre, with their site-specific performances, art-journeys and tourist mis-guides to Exeter and beyond. See it as a replacement for the I Ching or as a script for the play of your life. Buy it, tuck it into purse or pocket, and discover the theatre of life on and off the edge of the map." (Total Theatre, Summer 2006)

Additional sections of reviews of ***An Exeter Mis-Guide*** (published September 2003):

- "... often enlightening... positively dangerous... We loved this intriguing and amusing guide..." (*Devon Today*, October 2003)
- "With the book tucked in pocket I felt entitled, even licensed to poke around where it is normally discouraged even forbidden to enter..." (*liveartmagazine*, November 2003)
- "... one of the most unusual walking books around... a refreshing and often humorous read... [makes] us see the city in new and imaginative ways by exploring on foot..." (*Walk: The Magazine of the Ramblers' Association*, Spring 2004).
- "... The Mis-Guide succeeds by putting into writing small strategies, or jumping-off points, that seek to stimulate creativity in a society that seems to prefer spoon-fed entertainments and over-the-top spectacles. The graciousness with which this enterprising group of walking artists have invited us to do more than just admire, but to create art ourselves and rediscover the social function of the city, is truly an accomplishment..." (*Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture*, Winter 2005)

Selected pages from ***A Mis-Guide To Anywhere*** are available online at:

<http://www.mis-guide.com/mg/anywhere/samples.html> - please feel free to reproduce them, or to contact us if you would like to receive files in alternative formats or sizes.

More general information about Wrights & Sites and the 'Mis-Guide' project is available online at:

<http://www.mis-guide.com/>

Please contact us if you require any further information, or if you would like to interview a core member of Wrights & Sites.

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