

Roaming Narratives: New Architectural Methods for Remaking the City

Who is the city for? With public space under increasing pressure from market-led ideologies and development practices, questions of identity are urgent. We are developing architectural methods to engage people in writing the city's future and form new urban narratives. This is in part a response to existing opportunistic practices of city-branding that have co-opted the notion of narrative for place making, its marketing and investment. Until city making provides people with a meaningful role in determining an area's transformation, regeneration is often experienced as a process done to collective life rather than with it. Perhaps there is another way? To establish a new framework for urban projects we need new architectural methods that work with collective life. In this paper we present our ongoing fieldwork that is developing a range of peripatetic practices for architecture and urbanism. We identify the limitations of existing methods and then explain how practices of collective movement inscribe new patterns of use and behaviour, providing emergent modes of remaking the city. This is a reciprocal relationship as collective life in turn becomes restructured. Using field notes and documentary photography, we will draw on three bodies of ongoing work in peripatetic practice spanning twenty-five years: nightwalking, wastelanding, and collective nightwalking. We then discuss what collective movement affords in relation to the identity of place. This is area development that is slow, accretive, inclusive and plural in its nature. Practising from a place outwards our approach is action-based to empower people through ownership and sense of belonging, understanding the continuous evolution of identity. We conclude with how peripatetic practices are able to respond to the ephemeral city and may lead to a more sustainable form of regeneration than many existing approaches and removes a high degree of the risk of failure inherent to these.

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