

# Mis-Guided Wrights & Sites

Mis-Information Office, Ancienne Gare, Fribourg, Switzerland: Belluard Bollwerk International Festival Vernissage, 24 June 2008

## Introduction 1 - context [ Cathy ]

Qu'est-ce q'un 'Mis-Guide'?

C'est peut-être un guide touristique approximatif et peu fiable. Quelqu'un qui, dans son commentaire, parle de ce qui n'est pas construit, de ce qui n'est pas dit, du mirage, de la rumeur, de la périphérie, de la blague, et du rêve...

A guide such as Phil Smith became during our first performance on a boat along the Exeter Canal. Or such as Alex Hanna's Tschou-Tschou becomes as he deviates from his familiar Fribourg route.

Qu'est-ce qu'un 'Mis-Guide'?

C'est peut-être un livre pour découvrir la ville.

One like our *Exeter Mis-Guide* or *Mis-Guide to Anywhere*, that rather than tell you where to go and what to see, suggest ways to see the city no one else has found yet. One that offers frameworks for walking and experiencing - an invitation to follow your shadow; to read aloud the forgotten texts on monuments; to take a holiday in your home town; to imagine yesterday, today, tomorrow through a 'reverse archaeology' in which you look for ruins on which the future can be built.

Qu'est-ce qu'un 'Mis-Guide'? C'est peut-être un peu comme ce que les situationnistes appellent des 'situations construites', la création d'une ambiance nouvelle et enjouée, qui pourra changer l'utilisation du temps et de l'espace.

This could be through the imagined, spoken, sketched out architectures of our *Possible Forests* project, or the more concretely realised architectures of Christian Hasucha's Island, Nicolas Galeazzi's boxes, or Rajni Shah's altars.

Was ist den einem 'Mis-Guide'?

Vielleicht ist es ein 'Verfremdungs-Effekt'.

One like our 'Everyday festivals' in Exeter, which celebrated acts of waiting, reflections in windows, crowds, horizons and city birdlife. Or like Blaise Roulin and Yoann Chassot's re-centring of the city of Fribourg.

Qu'est-ce que c'est, d'être 'Mis-Guided'? C'est peut-être, comme le dit la situationniste Ralph Rumney, qu'à chaque fois qu'on sort de chez soi, une aventure nous attend au coin de la rue.

## Introduction 2 - Wrights & Sites [ Phil ]

Nous avons peu à peu livré la performance et la promenade aux autres. Lentement mais sûrement, la performance a pris forme, laissant présager de ce qu'elle pourrait devenir. Avec les autres, nous avons élaboré les choses, les plans de ville et les dialogues.

Au cours des dix dernières années, nous avons discuté et expérimenté, fait des erreurs et beaucoup appris d'elles... Toutefois, nous avons résisté à toute forme de tradition, esthétique ou politique unique. Au contraire, nous avons adopté une approche que nous appelons 'mythogéographie' qui implique la recherche, la re-composition et la pluralité des couches et des significations. Où que ce soit.

## *Tschou-Tschou* - Alexander Hana [ Simon ]

Le petit train de Fribourg, ré-orienté vers des destinations alternatives et inconnues.

The presence of a train as part of this Mis-Guide project should come as no surprise. What would Fribourg be without its transport life-lines of river and railway? But instead of the mighty trains that network Fribourg to the whole of Europe, Alexander Hanna has climbed aboard the tiny train, which he describes as a vehicle for 'a sort of cultural propaganda' and a 'unilateral glorification of the city'.

The new route and audio commentary devised for this project, takes the traveller on an alternative journey, providing a focus upon current occupations and mechanisms of the city. This work celebrates the everyday, the work day and the play spaces of Fribourg, through a number of voices, languages and peripatetic viewpoints. The little train will now travel down the streets where it is not expected, and will provide tourists and locals with the opportunity to bring to bear a gaze more often reserved for the hierarchical heritage sites of the city.

Tels des voyageurs dans les coulisses de la ville, les passagers deviennent également des acteurs du spectacle urbain. Leur apparence surprenante change l'histoire de Fribourg.

To be observed by those who are walking along its route, its track of buildings, signs, sounds, ambient and invisible stations.

### ***Die Insel* - Christian Hasucha [ Stephen ]**

After 18 hours behind the wheel of a truck, Christian arrived in Fribourg. He survived the road trip from Berlin on a diet of Van Morrison, Bob Dylan & Frank Sinatra. He almost didn't get here in time to start the build, as the truck weighed too much to get across the Swiss border on a Sunday night.

'It's a proposition,' Christian says of *The Island*.

If I'm right, then what he's proposing is the opportunity to form a point of view, from a point of view, just outside of the usual hustle and bustle of Fribourg.

Depuis le sommet de l'île, on ne peut pas voir les bords. Bien que l'on soit très en vue, à trois mètres du sol, on se sent en sécurité et dans une atmosphère étonnement intime.

Sitting on the summit of the island, you won't be able to see its edges. Despite being extremely visible, three metres above the pavement, there's a good chance that you'll feel very safe, and strangely private.

For the next week and a half, any of us has the opportunity to take 'time out' on this piece of land - not an island surrounded by water, but land surrounded by the ongoing everyday-ness of the city. Rather than dashing to catch a train, or get home, here is an opportunity to pause, to reflect, and to imagine the 'what ifs' of the city planner, constructor and day-to-day user.

It's a proposition, but, like most interesting work, there is latitude in the idea - you can go anywhere you want to with it. Pitch a tent overnight. Set yourself up on a 'blind' date. Use it as a cheap venue for a business meeting, or a birthday party. Protest. Dance. Restage the winning goal of EURO 2008. Whatever.

But, above all, please don't treat Christian's proposition as a purely conceptual one. Seize this unique opportunity. Use it as a springboard to develop your own proposition for the streets of Fribourg.

Because, afterwards, when will you ever get to spend three or more hours floating just above the heads of the city's commuters?

Because, afterwards, it will be remembered. And so, the space will be changed.

### ***Une boîte pour Fribourg* - Nicolas Galeazzi [ Simon ]**

Six installations. Six lieux à Fribourg. Toilettes. Vestiaires. Salles d'attente.

To reference Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*, the simplest house is a shell, a safe, protective shelter from the

elements of earth, water, fire and air. *Les boîtes pour Fribourg* have appeared in six locations of the city. They are the new children in an unbroken line of Fribourg's millennial architectural ancestors. Nicolas Galeazzi has created these temporary dwelling places, perhaps as a contest or challenge to the monumental stone worlds of municipal and ecumenical shrines. The sacred, the official, the seemingly immovable buildings of the city are the stuff of a heritage that may, at times, give more attention to the dead, rather than the living. These boxes are vulnerable spaces open to the elements. Tabula rasa, awaiting sudden changes and offering temporary resting places or waiting rooms for the living.

In *The Shape of Time*, George Kubler writes:

'Like crustacea, we depend for survival on an outer skeleton, upon a shell of historic cities and houses filled with things belonging to portions of the past.'

In an unstable world, where such outer skeletons and protective shells are no longer presumed to be the human rights of many, this project is a serious but playful reflection upon the necessities and luxuries of shelters from the storm.

### ***Le centre de Fribourg - Blaise Roulin & Yoann Chassot [ Cathy ]***

D'après le philosophe Français, Jacques Derrida, les marges sont au centre. Avec le travail de Yoann Chassot et de Blaise Roulin, le centre s'est écarté du centre commercial 'Fribourg Centre' et des centres municipaux et religieux : l'hôtel de ville et la cathédrale. Le centre et la marge se rejoignent dans un escalier sombre, où un chat solitaire cherche l'amitié.

The two representatives of the office of destabilisation du Canton de Fribourg have created a project full of the fierce pleasure of satirical play; a joke which reveals the activity of place-making as a network of discourses - historical, sociological, geographical, commercial, political. It's a game to be taken seriously. Their unbalancing act of supposed 'stabilisation' reveals the city, in Lefebvre's words - and despite the most respected of municipal authorities - 'as what it always was... permanent disequilibrium... the moment of play and of the unpredictable.'

### ***Altars of us all / speaking to strangers - Rajni Shah [ Phil ]***

The city is a series of opportunities. But they can be opportunities to destroy ourselves, to offer ourselves up as victims, they can be opportunities to give up, relinquish, surrender. Cities offer many retail opportunities, with freedom to graze morbidly. The city is an opportunity for meetings: the speed dating of thief and handbag, stalker and displaced object, entrepreneur and victim. Opportunity itself becomes a commodity, not only an opportunity for commodities. Opportunities are traded on the futures market, are dealt in small sachets, are traded in school playgrounds, are offered free with popular magazines and sugar-sweetened meats.

But none of that should stop us from accepting the hidden opportunities of the city: the barriers that can be democracy walls, the electricity units that can be cocktail bars, the riversides that can be beaches, the bus shelters that can be confessionals and consulting rooms, the wastelands that can be pharmacies, the voids beneath elevated motorways that can be boardrooms.

We should not allow the dominance of currency to stop us enjoying the currents of the streets, to stop us navigating the pulls and swells of bodies, emotions, visions, desires, dynamics, transcendence, mechanics, antiquities and sports that do not need to be bought and sold.

Nous devrions inventer nos propres moyens d'échanges, nos propres rencontres et autels, à travers lesquels nous pouvons passer d'un monde à l'autre, transmettre nos salutations, cadeaux, souvenirs, concepts, offrandes, tubes, pipes, pièces détachés, papier bulle, collections et enveloppes.

What if there was such a place in this city where people could pass these things across a plane, like a table top, light on one side where the giver could stand and pass what they had brought into darkness. And another place where people could go and could receive things across a plane: the things arriving from darkness into light. And there would be no connection; no deserving poor, no act of patronage, no coordination, no currency, no speculation would be worthwhile for there would be no criteria. Only human

exchanges. Things. Passing through the darkness of space. Not an exemplary, but an anomaly. Begging a question, that irritates the idle speculator: what if the world was a parade of anomalies? Would it be more like an experiment than those fabricated in laboratories?

### ***Gestern, Heute, Morgen / Hier, aujourd'hui, demain - Robert Walker [ Stephen ]***

During our first visit to Fribourg, Simon, Cathy and Robert contemplated Robert's images of demolition. Would they be read as nostalgic, depressing? Robert explained that, as an architect, he did not read demolition as something inherently negative, or regrettable.

Le projet de Walker nous rappelle cette ville, qui par nature, est en constante métamorphose et dont l'histoire se voit enrichie à chaque instant.

If Robert is the epitome of the 'architect-walker' that Phil dreamed of in our *Manifesto for a new walking culture*, his stereo viewers invite us to walk with not just double, but triple vision, as past, present and future seem to hover before us in a single moment. We experiment with unfocusing and refocusing our eyes, trying to see the tiny 3-D image in conjunction with the present day view. As we look, new apartments are grafted onto old ruins; the shape of a bank echoes the shape of the building that preceded it; a mural is revealed across an open space, until the buildings creep back and once again, it is seen only when one looks up at an angle, slowly taking in a pair of eyes, a mouth, a face.

It is not only the walkers, but the buildings that are on the move.

### **The Mis-Information Office [ All ]**

1. The Mis-Information Office based in this building is designed to show traces of the artists' works - while sign-posting the public to go out into the city to experience the Mis-Guide projects on the ground.
2. We hope that the Mis-Information Office will act as a hub, a place of rest, discussion and focal point for the Mis-Guided season.
3. We encourage a social and interactive space where people can feel free to come and go, bringing reports, findings and responses to the Fribourg they have encountered.
4. Come to the Mis-Information Office. Rent an island. Make gifts for strangers. Transform a box into a place. Climb aboard the Mis-Guided train. Visit the new centre of Fribourg. Walk the streets of Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow.