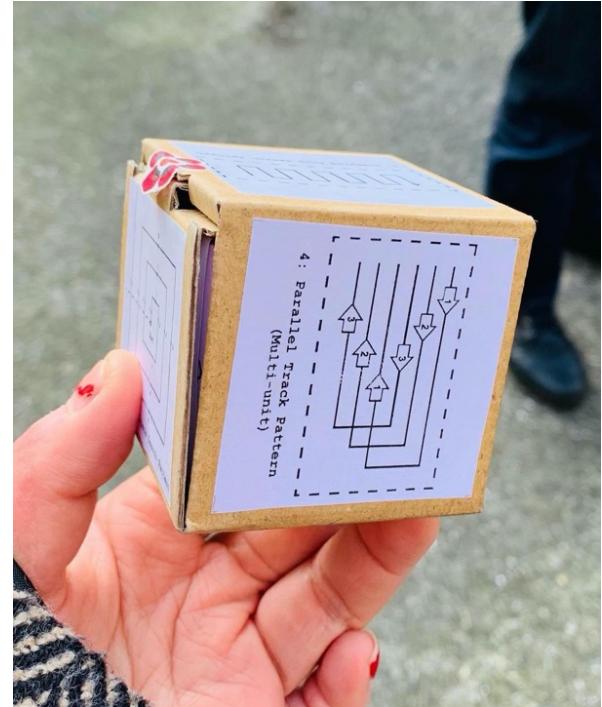




Widdershins Osaka! 2023

After a 2 year hiatus (Covid, my living in China, my general malaise) *Widdershins Osaka!* returned to the streets for this year's Terminalia on February 23rd. 'Reading-the-room' during the walk and then receiving feedback from walkers afterwards, it appeared people got a lot out of our few hours of urban drift. This was the first year I'd invited others to participate in organising and contributing to the walk's creative content and the event benefited from their involvement in a number of ways. Both Chika Ueda, who has participated in each of the five previous walks, and Jerry Gordon whose novel *Terminalian Drift*¹ spins a story out of his encounters on *Widdershins Osaka!* 2018 helped shape the walk's structure and co-conjure its interventions and micro-performances.



Previous walks have followed a circuit that emerged out my mapping Leeds boundary bars onto central Osaka.² This year we didn't walk that circuit but aimed to drift around inside it. As organisers we relinquished control of the actual route, handing it over instead to those who joined the walk. At the

outset, a long painted stick or cane (a variation on one of Jerry's signature props) with a cluster of little cubes tied to one end was handed to a participant who was asked to walk in any direction they chose. The rest of the group was instructed to follow. The stick-bearer rolled a set of dice to determine how many minutes they would lead the group in this way. When the time was up the group stopped and the stick-bearer was asked to choose a box from the cluster and open it. Inside was a quote, some instructions and objects such as acorns, a toy, or paper flowers³. Together these items asked the walker to give thought to their engagement with the city, perhaps through listening for incongruous sounds, or seeking out hidden fissures in the fabric of the city where flowers might secretly flourish, or identifying micro-landscapes embedded within the wider terrain. Once satisfied, the bearer then handed the stick to another in the group who would shake the dice and set off, again in any direction they chose, and again with the group in tow. Over the course of the morning the stick changed hands perhaps eight times.

In a strong voice, read out **the quote** and **your instructions**

**The real voyage of discovery consists, not in seeking new landscapes,
but in having new eyes.***

Your box contains 6 pairs of paper eyes. As you walk seek out micro-landscapes within the broader cityscape: forests of potted bonsai; jungles of electrical cabling or air conditioner ducting; labyrinths of stacked cardboard boxes; etc. When you discover such a landscape position a pair of paper eyes so they can view it. Continue to distribute the eyes until you have only one pair left- use it to find an undiscovered micro-landscape somewhere in your own home.

*From the fifth volume of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*.

大きな声で後に続く引用文と指示を読んでください。

真の発見の旅とは、新しい景色を探すことではない。新しい目で見ることなのだ*

箱の中に6組の紙の目が入っています。歩きながら巨大都市の中にある小さな小さな風景（マイクロランドスケープ）を探しましょう。盆栽鉢の森、電線やエアコン排気管のジャングル、山積みされたダンボールの迷宮など。そのような風景を見つけた際には紙の目の1組をその場に置き、その景色を見せてあげましょう。最後の1組になるまで小さな小さな風景（マイクロランドスケープ）を見つける度に、それを観察するため目を置いていきましょう。最後の1組はご自身のご家庭にあるマイクロランドスケープ発見のためお持ち帰りください。

*マルセル・プルースト『失われた時を求めて第5巻』

Ding-ding, ding-ding. At unpredictable points during the walk Jerry, Chika or I would ring a bell to stop the walk and alert the group to the fact that we had hit the boundary. At the outset, each walker had been given a 'Widdershins pack' with a membership card on a lanyard, a brief history of the event and a map of our terrain. Many took this moment to consult the map to get their bearings. This pause was also a time to invite audience members who wished to do so, to lead an intervention, voice a reading or instigate a micro-performance. The event-call put out on social media had let people know there would be an opportunity for them to contribute in this way if they wished. The call emphasised that they didn't need to be artists or performers and that simply *doing/sharing* was what it was all about. The group was generally shy but a few interesting happenings happened. At one boundary point Jerry voiced a poem from a walker who was not able to join but who had written something specifically for this walk while at a bridge over the river a member of the group produced a baton from inside his coat and ran the length of the bridge 'playing' the railings with the baton as he moved. The percussive rhythm echoed in the space between the high buildings that skirted the river.

'Emergency!' is an intervention that I have included in one form or another in previous walks. Walkers are asked to listen to the city, and in particular to listen out for alarms such as building fire alarms, car security alarms, or the sirens of emergency vehicles. When such an alarm is heard they are to shout "emergency" which in turn triggers a response from the group. The aim is to suggest that the city is a network of triggers, or that it is a machine in which we are a component- the city acts upon us as much

as we act upon it. In 2019 “emergency!” was particularly successful. The cry of “emergency!” was a trigger for walkers to find a place where they could put the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet on four separate surfaces simultaneously— a kind of urban Twister— left hand railing, right hand sign-pole, left foot bench top, right foot pavement, for example. We had to then count out loud “5, 4, 3 ,2, 1 emergency over!” before relaxing our position and returning to the group. I had worried that the predominantly middle-aged group would see it as juvenile, be reluctant to participate and that the action (and by extension the energy of the walk) would fall flat. Wrong! Time and time again, and with increasing hilarity, we watched each other scatter like rats to find nooks and crannies within the fabric of the city that would accommodate our contortions.

For this year’s ‘emergency’ Chika, Jerry and I each wrote 5 prompts on paper slips that we put in a bag. We designated a member of the group as the bag-carrier at the start of the walk without discussing the contents or function of the bag. Some way into our meander I explained the rules and reasoning behind ‘emergency’ and asked the bag-carrier to draw out one of the 15 slips and read it to the group. This was to be our action when triggered by the emergency call.

From where you are standing, imagine a person watching you from the highest window you can see. Use mime, gesture and eye contact to explain to them *Widdershins Osaka!* Continue to gesture until you are sure they understand.⁴

一番高い場所にある窓を見つけてください。その窓から誰かあなたのことを見ています。彼、彼女とアイコンタクトを取り身振り手振りシグナルを駆使して、*ウィタジンス大阪!*かー体全体何なのかを説明しましょう。彼、彼女の理解が確実になるまで続けましょう。

As in previous years, when triggered by the city walkers performed the task assigned. Once complete, the next prompt was drawn from the bag designating a new task to be performed whenever the city might next declare an emergency. We encountered perhaps four or five along the way.



In previous walks I have made the mistake of not defining the duration of the walk and it has tended to run on too long with even the most enthusiastic participants tiring. In this year’s call I allocated 2 and a half hours on the morning of 23rd (which now happens to be a new public holiday celebrating the new emperor’s birthday) and I reiterated when we assembled at 10:00am that our walk was an aimless drift

and would end when the time was up rather than when we had reached any predetermined destination. By chance, our time ran out as we arrived at a significant point in the layered history of *Widdershins Osaka*. At 12:30 we arrived at the place where Leeds West Bar was plotted onto Osaka during the first Widdershins walk in 2016. It's the site of a magnificent cherry blossom tree. Those first walkers had decided that this was a fitting surrogate for the absent boundary stones we were searching for on that 2016 walk. Within an area we imagined where its petals might fall at the end of the sakura-viewing season, those past walkers hid paper blossoms inscribed with hopes and wishes addressed to whoever might one day chance upon them. None of this year's walkers found any of those paper blossoms. Although the tree had yet to blossom, it was a fitting place to have a final intervention and wrap up our morning's *dérive*. Charles asked us to write on a card a place we wished to travel one day in the future. He assigned each of us a partner and asked us to exchange cards, and to take care of our partner's *destinations of desire*; to lose the card would doom our partner to never visit their desired destination.

As we began to disperse I passed out the remaining boxes still tied to the stick. I drew attention to the diagrams pasted to each face of their box. I explained that they are six International maritime search and rescue patterns. I asked them to toss their search & rescue dice in the air, to look at the pattern that lay face up and to consider the way its lines, shapes, figures and notations might inform their journey home. I could have spent more time on this activity but felt we had already crossed a threshold and left Widdershins time and space behind us. There will be opportunity to return to these patterns in future walks but from *Widdershins Osaka!* 2023 it was time to step back, to reflect, and for each of us decide where we were going next to satisfy the growing rumblings of our stomachs.



¹ Triarchy Press, 2022

² See the document *A Very Brief Introduction to Widdershins Osaka!* for the origin and context of *Widdershins Osaka!*

³ All written and spoken instructions, prepared readings and quotes are given in both English and Japanese.

⁴ This prompt owes something to Michel de Certeau's idea of the city being divided between *voyeurs*, who look down from high penthouse windows and strategize the city, and *walkers*, who negotiate the city at street level by way of *tactics*.