

Information for Audience

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Article: Widdershins Osaka: Entangled Walking in the Contemporary City

This image-led presentation describes how interdisciplinary, practice-based research with methods based in walking can disrupt habituated understandings of place and power while (re-) instilling cultural and environmental well-being. It will first contextualize my practice which synthesizes Western spatial praxes such as the Situationist's *psychogeography* with Japanese understandings of space including *shakkei* 'borrowed scenery' and *kekkaï* spiritual boundary markers. It will then focus on my on-going, group-walking project, *Widdershins* Osaka*. Here, by adapting Situationist methods, the medieval history of Leeds, England becomes entangled with the contemporary spaces of Osaka, Japan: the six boundary stones that once ringed 16th century Leeds are mapped onto the Japanese city and the resultant circuit is then walked by the group who employ readings, performance, and games of chance to search for (invoke) the absent stones. This engagement with cultural artifacts that are not materially present forces a reconsideration of our everyday understandings of the urban environment.

* *Widdershins*: counter-clockwise (archaic, British).

Keywords: walking arts; interdisciplinarity; psychogeography; boundaries; Osaka; Situationists

Gareth is a British artist, researcher and teacher who divides his time between Japan and the UK. With Masters degrees in both Visual Arts and Applied Linguistics his creative practice has shifted from drawing towards an interdisciplinary enquiry into global and local space. Aimed at promoting personal, cultural and environmental wellbeing, Gareth's practice entangles psychogeographic methods with cultural and material elements specific to Japan and to his personal circumstances. Gareth has exhibited his art internationally and is a regular contributor to The Japan Writers Conference. He is studying for his PhD within the School of Humanities at The University of Dundee, Scotland while teaching at a number of universities in the Kansai region of Japan.