

# Mythogeography: A Manifesto

1. mythogeography is an experimental approach to the site of performance (in its very broadest, everyday sense) as a space of multiple layers.

2. it is also a geography of the body. It means to carry a second head or an appendix organism, multiple viewpoints, to always walk with one's own hybrid as companion (see the prostheses of Kinga Araya<sup>1</sup>).



3. it is a philosophy of perception, always mobile; it is a thinking that allows the reader to ride the senses, and to use those senses as tentacles actively seeking out information, never as passive receptors of it; perceiving not objects, but differences.

4. the space of mythogeography is neither bounded nor sliced by time, but is made up of trajectories, routes, lines of journey and cargo. The places of mythogeography are defined by the reach and roundabouts of their commerce, traffic, interaction and solidarities. It aspires to a new, mobile architecture of exchange where strangers are changed into friends.

5. mythogeography, as a way of thinking, is led from its margins. As an exploratory practice<sup>2</sup> it is guided by its periphery.

6. mythogeography is not a discipline, but a setting of many disciplines in orbit about each other; it is not an accumulation of data, but a description of the relations and trajectories.

7. mythogeography mythologises the geographer. Everyone can play their own part, choose their own role. The mythologised geographer's 'self' is one such selected story. The self is a very successful evolutionary category, a super-meme, but

mythogeographers can still play 'Nature' and select their own. Then the mythogeographer's self becomes like a discipline, to be practiced just like any other, and is set – like all other disciplines of mythogeography – in orbit.

8. mythogeography arose from an aggressive, critical engagement with the monolithic, constrained and homogenous labelling of certain 'historic' spaces by the heritage industry and by agencies of national and municipal identity-making.
9. mythogeography opposes the monocular with the politics and theatre of the everyday, the atmospheres and fictional town-planning of psychogeography, the Fortean procession of 'damned data', and (both analogically and directly) geological, archaeological and historiographical methods. It is self-reflexive in the sense that it regards the mythogeographer, the performer and the activist as being just as much multiplicitous and questionable sites as the landscapes they move in.
10. mythogeography has not developed in a vacuum, but as part of a growing practice of disruptions and explorations, including those of occult psychogeographers like Alan Moore, performers and walkers like Lone Twin, ambulatory architect-activists such as those of the Stalker group in Rome, urban explorers like the late Ninjalicious and artists of the everyday like Clare Qualmann, Gail Burton and Serena Korda of walkwalkwalk.
11. mythogeography uses techniques of collection, trespass, observation and a mapping that upsets functional journeys. It deploys the means to heighten or change perception. It exercises performativity, embodiment and subversions of official tour guide discourse. It subjects the layers of meaning in any place to a rigorous historiographical (or alternative and appropriate) interrogation, while connecting the diverse layers and exploiting the gaps between them as places of revelation and change. It avoids 'scientific' aloofness, or any kind of collapse into a monocular satire or a capitulation to safe and policed forms of eccentricity.
12. it practices a 'hermeneutics of fear', it is nervous about the annihilation of human consciousness. It adopts a low level paranoia, beginning with, and then testing out, the over-explanation of things.
13. it does not discriminate between respectable and non-respectable types of knowledge, but insists on the presence of popular, trash, pulp layers, and the foregrounding of the mythogeographer's autobiographical and non-rational associations, exposing the ways these different layers are received and, through its penchant for try-too-hard/over-ideological trash culture, reaches for a poetics of the Spectacle.  
  
*"what is going on in the lower reaches of society is probably very much more potent and effective than what happens in intellectual circles."* (Ekkehard Hieronimus)
14. it studies dynamic forms (the patterns of patterns).
15. the mythogeographical 'tool kit' cannot be definitively assembled, is mostly invisible (fanciful, conceptual or microscopic), and banal in its material components.

16. mytho-geography can be spelt with or spelled without the hyphen, but it is a hyphenated practice.
17. mythogeography is not a finished model, neither in its theoretical nor its practical forms. It is a general approach which emphasises hybridity, and does not attempt to determine what combination of elements might constitute that hybridity.
18. mythogeography is an invitation to practise, to share, to connect, but also to take the risk of comparison and to practise implicit and explicit criticism of each other's practices and theories.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.kingaaraya.com>

<sup>2</sup> Mythogeographical exploration is a state of mind set in motion around a set of actions. It is not a sociological categorisation of place, but a disrespectful variation on the discipline of geography. Mythogeographical exploration alters the experience of everyday place. Even in the least remarkable of terrains the unfolding narrative of exploration peels back one vista after another [see \* below], disturbs the silt, turns signage ironical or poetic, sparks revelatory detail in a banal encounter. Each of these adds incrementally to the mobile sculpting of the exploratory walk (FF?), as it transforms quotidian spaces into sites of wonder.

*“Outside an isolated village, drifters come upon anonymous, wooden buildings. Dog owners bring their sick pets here for aqua-therapy. The place is unexceptional, but it is part of a gathering narrative-weave of water supplies, filters and springs. A momentary glimpse of a dog massaged beneath the waters trips the physiological into the shrine.”*

The narrative of the exploratory journey gives to the explorer a completely different sensation from that of the visitor on a planned jaunt. Given the technological development of representation and of a pre-emptedness grown obese, pressure bears down on the diminishing returns of the exotic. The everyday is becoming similarly and correctly fraught. Exploration makes pleasurable difficult what post-colonialism had configured banal.

\* For a physically inscribed sense of the unfolding of the vistas, check James J. Gibson's description in *The Ecological Approach To Visual Perception*. Or walk without maps or the need to arrive, experiencing sequence. Or walk (but not at high tide) from the tiny railway platform at Llanbedr, Wales, to Shell Island, as fields become dereliction, become military and Cold War, become dread, stream-bitten openness, become multilayered holiday camp canteen where a sophisticated past peeps from behind gibbering fruit machines.