

SELECTION

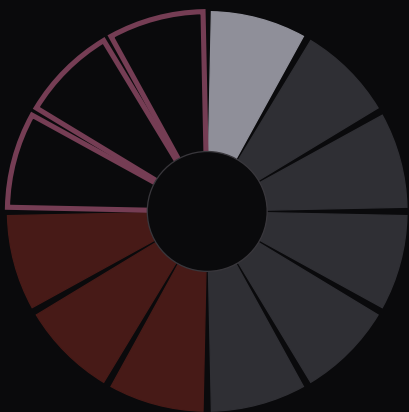
A creative idea arrives from nowhere you can point at. Nothing has been chosen yet, but something is close to being chosen, you can feel the click before it happens. This is the purest inside: a flicker of awareness in the dark, a compulsion that has no argument behind it and needs none. It is not a decision. It is the moment before a decision, when the decision is already inevitable and you have not yet moved.

LEAKE STREET

An urge to paint. Not an idea for a painting, the urge itself, prior to any image. A direct calling that is both subtle and total. A familiar knowing without knowing what. Unquestioned, but the thing that prompts every question after it.

MIND THE MAP

A sudden idea to make something on a set of Ordnance Survey maps that belonged to my late father. Not a concept, a refusal to let them be useless. The maps were there, they were his, they were folded in a drawer doing nothing, and the thought that arrived was not what shall I make but these must not be wasted. The creative act began as an act of rescue.



FORGETTING

The seed slowly takes form and you begin to focus by forgetting what else is around you. There is a sense of moving beyond selection by deselection. The visual capability of process forms in your mind, or words are whispered as thoughts, or patterns appear that seem to start solving themselves, or familiar senses cross-reference without being asked. Nothing is decided. The material is gathering itself while you stand still inside it.

LEAKE STREET

A mural, dashed and ill-formed, starts to tease at its coming. Through flashes of visual reference, through connecting with something as you glance at a book, or listen to a piece of music, or a half-heard conversation, or watching a cartoon, or seeing someone post their latest piece on social media. None of these is the idea. Each is a surface the idea briefly touches on its way past.

MIND THE MAP

I start to open the maps one by one and feel the memories of my father pass through my fingers. I feel the history of expeditions he went on, and can imagine the terrain under his feet and the smell of the outside as it passes him. I sense a green light from him, a seal of approval. I start to wonder what to do with them. The intensity to create grows, and it grows from the handling, not from any plan.



ARRIVAL

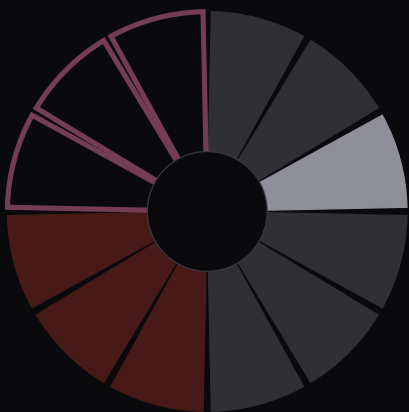
The question what is this is answered from outside, and the answer arrives in physical form. What was abstract becomes tangible. A pen meets paper, a brush meets canvas, fingers meet a keyboard, a body meets the dancefloor. The outside energy that could not be expressed from within opens the door and flicks the switch to on. You did not generate it. You received it, and now it is moving through your hands.

LEAKE STREET

You drag your paints by public transport to Leake Street and you are absorbed into the melee. You negotiate the space, bargain with the walls, take a deep breath and enter the vein. Everything before this was preparation. This is the moment the preparation was for, and it feels nothing like the preparation did.

MIND THE MAP

I reach out and wonder if I can share these canvases with others, share my father's legacy and watch with amusement as I start calling over social media for people to join me in a collaborative process to destroy, complement, or destroy and complement one another. The maps stop being his and start being ours, and that is the arrival, not the idea that preceded it.



ANSWER

The world responds, in full force. The subject engages you, it celebrates or offends or is somewhere in between. It willingly connects. It is never indifferent. You respond by responding, layers of quality and quantity forming from the moment the creativity commences. The pathway appears, the doing, the verb, action, impetus. Nothing asks for permission and nothing waits.

LEAKE STREET

The moment you claim the wall with the cheap emulsion and quickly cover the piece underneath, you are connected to the energy in the space. The walls know you are there. They start to interact with you. Friction presents as spray meets wall meets hands meets nose. The sketch explodes, whether on the wall itself or as a guide in your mind's eye. You are no longer planning. You are inside it.

MIND THE MAP

A rule is defined from the first collaboration. Two map artworks per artist, one starts and the other finishes, and vice versa. The first artworks immediately blend with ease and the process lights up. The rule was simple enough to hold many hands and strict enough that nobody could work alone.



PLAN

The road to wherever becomes the welcome treadmill. Time is its gravel and choices are its fencing. The construction forms as the forming flows. The energy that arrived from outside becomes the unique expression of the moment. The making, the struggle, the triumphs, the design, the lessons learnt that form the skills used. The plan was never drawn beforehand. The plan is the process becoming visible.

LEAKE STREET

You are in the atmosphere of the space but you are transcending it. You are unaware of what is around you. The primary purpose is to build the layers, control the phenomena of the emerging mural without controlling its need for expression. The mural that already existed makes itself known, like the statue that was locked in the lump of marble. You are not forming it. You are finding it.

MIND THE MAP

Each artist is their own tune, their own expectation. With each collaboration the record needle is placed on a new vinyl and I do not know what will be played. I work on regardless, excited by the opportunity, and I do not question the moment. The not knowing is the material. The moment I know, it is finished, and this is not that moment.



DONE

The moment the final jigsaw piece is placed, the moment the final note is written on the score, the moment a vessel is stopped from spinning on the wheel. Done is done, sometimes ignored, but its quiet victory cannot be denied for long. It is the pivot turn, the top of the hill after a long walk, and you are blessed with the glorious downhill on the other side. You did not choose to stop. The stopping chose you.

LEAKE STREET

The final spray. That moment where the lens of creativity becomes the pedestal of creation. Content becomes frame. It is the epic moment of quiet recognition, the trance is lifted, and the artist comes to. You look at the wall and the wall looks back and neither of you needs anything else from the other.

MIND THE MAP

The maps in all their eclectic glory have one simple thing in common. They let you know when to stop. They simply tell you, I am done. The tools of creating are placed down as the map painting says hello. It was never yours to finish. It was yours to stop.



DETACH

Part of you that was made from you is no longer you. It no longer belongs to you. The conversation that is born in your mind, that works through the nervous system and leaves your mouth by efforts of muscular positioning and vocal expression, exits you and enters the air around you. It becomes your outside, and that outside merges with the outside that already is. What was internal is now in the world, and the world does not ask your permission to receive it.

LEAKE STREET

You stand back from the wall and you are suddenly aware that you are less somehow, and yet more in some respects. A trade has occurred. The energy spent has given back to you in other ways. You are lighter and the wall is heavier and neither condition is reversible.

MIND THE MAP

Fifty-five artists, one hundred and ten works, one bulging box of amazing work. After weeks you have the results of a well-worked experiment in front of you. You run your hands over the folded maps and wonder at how much volume of work is able to be held in a small space. Numerous acts of letting go, all folded together and still warm.



SHARE

The moment the audience becomes more than yourself and the thing that has left you. Your creation builds a lattice of connection to things orbiting it. Reactions, frictions, alchemy, outcomes. A sense of responsibility. A dialogue with the world around you, and the world dialogues back. What you made is no longer what you made. It is what they received.

LEAKE STREET

The mural starts to merge with the chaos around it and the trance of the artist slowly fades and awareness opens up and you see others taking photos of you next to your piece. They smile and you smile back and they feel able to open a conversation about what you have done, and before you know it, new opportunities. The wall gave you nothing while you were painting it. It gives you everything once you stop.

MIND THE MAP

I am taking photos and filming the pieces. I am talking to the artists about their experiences working on the collaborations. I am aware of them more from the sharing of artistic endeavour. I am better for it. The project made me a receiver, which is something I could not have done for myself.



RELEASE

For every beginning there is an end that begins another. To move is to move from. Each action a step away from what was. The unrelenting process of letting go so you can experience more in the space it provides. Expansion into the vacuum left by others. You do not release the work. You release yourself from it.

LEAKE STREET

The strange moment when you have to depart, and that one more glance over your shoulder to see the mural one last time, knowing that you cannot stay and that to stay is to defy the reason the space works and the reason why the mural could exist in the first place. The tunnel was there before you and will be painted over after you. That is not a loss. That is the contract.

MIND THE MAP

I am placing the work in spaces I have to leave. A café, a window in a shopping centre, a wall in an old building, an exhibition space. I leave some laminated information that demands nothing and expects everything. The maps go where I cannot follow, and that was always the point.



UNKNOWN

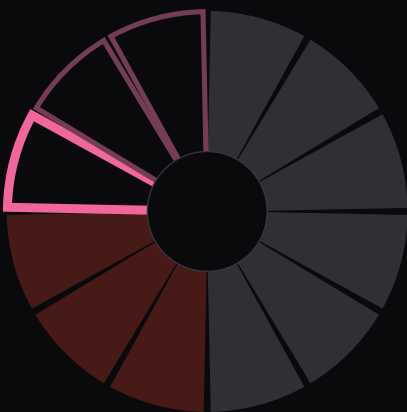
There is a beyond you that reacts to you that you cannot experience. If you leave an anonymous random act of kindness you do not know its outcome, but you feel gleefully good for it. A million and one outcomes play out, all of them exist. If you place an artwork on a wall for a period of time you are starting a conversation you cannot hear. But the conversation does not need you to hear it.

LEAKE STREET

The mural marks others in ways you cannot experience and never comprehend, until if you are lucky enough, further down the line, the echo of its existence returns to you in the form of oh, you are that artist who does those figures. Your legacy defines you, not you it. You find out what you made by hearing it described by someone who was never told.

MIND THE MAP

Any collaboration has a profound ripple effect. Sharing the space of creation runs both ways. The map of reactions takes others to places you have no access to, until someone somewhere points out the gift of adding one to another to get a third. That third thing belongs to nobody and exists because of everybody.



ACCEPTANCE

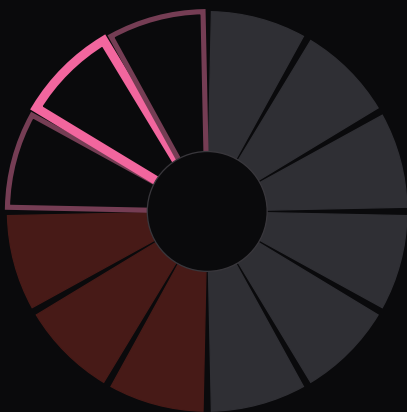
The reset, the reboot, the residue. The scene has played out in full and all the players have left the stage. The stage is always the same stage but the stage is changed. The floor is scuffed. The air is warmed. A tide that goes out comes back in and the pebbles that make the beach are all different because of it, but the beach is the same.

LEAKE STREET

The mural is destroyed but it lives in the layer that covers it. The state of the wall is expanded but it is hidden. You can get glimpses of this process when you see kids with felt-tip pens and overexcited tourists with a discarded spray can, diligently doing the job of renewing by death. What replaces you is not your enemy. It is your proof.

MIND THE MAP

The pieces find new homes and leave the collaborative platform, which asks what now. Every departure demands a question that tries to fill the space it creates. That question is the residue. It is the only thing that survives the cycle, and it is not an answer.



INFINITY / FINITE

The return to source. The cycle is completed but the lift has engaged. The infinite potential of the questions that come from before is answered by a simple choice as the question finds its answer. The answer is the beginning of the new cycle. A finite expression of an infinite space. It does not close. It rises.

LEAKE STREET

The space is expressed as a never-ending conveyor belt of visual manifestations. Those manifestations come in the form of an inspiration carried forward in the form of a question. What can I create today. The tunnel does not remember you. It remembers that someone was here, and that is enough to bring the next one in.

MIND THE MAP

My father's legacy, endless in its impact, spreading outwards as people step into these strange map artworks and ask themselves where am I in this. The map smiles and says you are here, why don't you try and find you.

