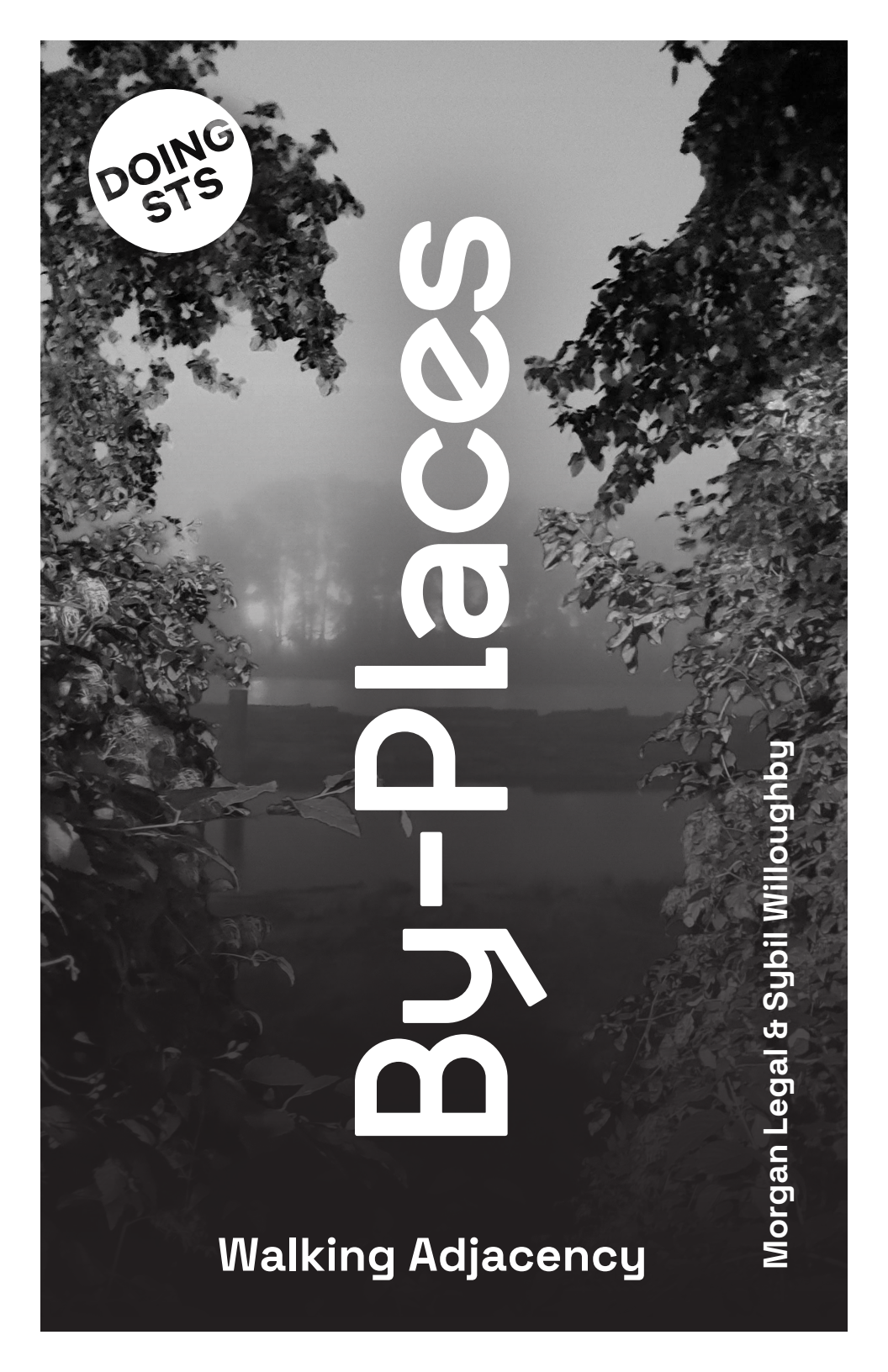




**DOING
STS**

By-Places

Walking Adjacency

Morgan Legal & Sybil Willoughby

By-Places

Walking Adjacency



Photo: Morgan Legal & Subil Willoughby

1 to 4pm, November 22, 2025
Fraser River Trail Park

What Are By-Places?	1
Readings	2
Propositions	4
Figures	6

What Are

By-Places?

Underneath the city, between the new housing developments, beside the train tracks, strewn with trash or shrouded in razor-sharp brambles, something is growing. If you look too hard, you'll miss it. To find what does not want to be found, you'll have to get lost, lose yourself. The urban landscape is teeming with undergrowth, underworlds, underplaces. Places in the making, places always beside something, something neither here nor there. They are places of refuge, desire paths, fire pits, ashtrays, guerrilla gardens, and encampments. They pop up in the edges, waysides,



Photo: Morgan Legal & Sybil Willoughby

and back corners where those with nowhere else to go gather. They are constantly on the run from the city and its master plans made to construct places for “legitimate use”. They rely on minor forms of activity, those of outcasts, weeds, strays, and wanderers. They are *by-places*.

We invite you to get lost, to feel these otherworldings at work in this text, and in the world around you. For they are at work everywhere, always unfinished, always beside, beneath, behind, and before. By following a feeling, one is transported, transformed even, into worlds not yet realized. We hope that by following this text, you’ll begin to notice new lines of escape. Perhaps you’ll feel a strange urge to follow a small dirt path behind a building you’d otherwise pass by, or peer through a net of brambles in an abandoned lot. What new worlds lie in wait in the incipient feelings of the city? You can find out; all you have to do is go nowhere.

Readings

“Many words walk in the world. Many worlds are made. Many worlds are made for us. There are words and worlds which are lies and injustices. There are words and worlds which are truths and truthful. We make true words. We have been made from true words. In the world of the powerful there is no space for anyone but themselves and their servants. In the world we want everyone fits. In the world we want many worlds to fit.”
(Marcos, 1996)

“Professor Miyoshi recognizes that the city is where life escapes but that recognition is already embedded in a thinking of the undercommons, the (under)commune, against and outside architecture.... Outside as in before, of the attraction against attractions and amenities, of attraction in the supposedly unattractive, whose music is discomposed by the curmudgeon, the outside, the *metoikos*, the fugitive, the exile, the hermit, the complainer. The attraction of the unattractive moves in another ecology. Where else can that thinking occur now than at the edge of the (image of the) city?” (Moten, 2017, p.191)

“[A] territory of care in which creatures of all kinds, animals, ghosts, machines, things, and perhaps humans ... do not exist by blood and soil and being born or by property and law and individuality, but subsist by their singular subsistence. ... Subsistence here does not mean the reduction to a forced economy of self-sufficiency, coming from lack, determined by necessity, economy, self-supply. The economy of subsistence is a queer feminist economy of mutual care.” (Raunig, 2022, p.188)

“The immanence of the wasteland is often forgotten, but it lies in wait to generate new realities.... To craft with feral species found here, at the tangled edges of private property, is an act of conjure that ushers forth once-dormant powers that refuse while simultaneously healing, dreaming, and claiming another modernity where revolutionaries can resist systemic violence and thrive.” (Haughwout & Kellhammer, 2025, p.423)

“It’s not dead matter that grounds us but the capacity to correspond with a multiplicity of continuous worldings that are both plastic and dense.... What’s a form of critique that can emulate this compositional

process? Not conventions of defending a proper relation between subject, concept, and world but, maybe, forms of detour, pause, and haptic description of what seems to be unfolding.” (Stewart, 2019)

“These spaces, encampments, shanty towns, bushes and weeds, are the only places in the city where life pushes back against the ‘repeated, targeted dispossessions’ of the city’s ‘armed incursion’ (Harney and Moten, 2013, p. 17). They are by-places, affective loci of resistance, brimming with worlds in the making. Rather than fighting the city’s logic on its grounds, we would do best to affirm the potentials of these cracks in the fabric of urban planning, as Harney and Moten say, we are ‘tasked with the defense of the surround’ (2013, p.17). This force, this otherworldly pull, towards the life which was always there from the start, is what makes by-places unique.” (Legal & Willoughby, 2025, p.12)

Propositions

PROPOSITION FOR WANDERING

We invite you to wander, get lost, follow the cracks and affective contours of the urban landscape off into adjacency. Form pairs or small groups to wander with and take some an/archiving supplies before you set off. To find your way as you wander you can start with the figures in this zine. You may see a desire path, painted colors, or a fire pit; follow them and see where else they lead. You may find new figures and signs to follow along the way. Go slow and leave room for the elsewhere to draw your curiosity.

PROPOSITION FOR GATHERING

Off to the side of or along your wandering route, find a place to stop and linger. Be selective, find somewhere you want to take a moment to attune to your surroundings. Feel out how the environment facilitates your lingering (or not). What grows around you? What things, sediments, or traces of past use are assembled in this place? How might they have gotten there? Gather some traces of this by-place (this can be photos, audio recordings, drawings, mappings, or fragments of writing).

PROPOSITION FOR SHARING SPACE

The ephemeral spaces we will be wandering through, are inhabited and traversed by a changing and unknowable variety of beings both human and non-human. By-places require care. This means that by wandering you are already participating in making space. Try to remain open and responsive to other ways of living, inhabiting, and place-making that you encounter. Allow your path to be redirected, detoured, or inflected by the ways beings you encounter co-compose space and place. If you stumble upon someone occupying a by-place, or an encampment in the bushes, do not intrude.

PROPOSITION FOR AN/ARCHIVING

An an/archive is a “repertory of traces of collaborative research creation events.” (Masumi, 2016, p.6)

Collecting these traces together is a way to carry forward the potential of what we have experienced here together, and by extension a way to carry forward the potential of by-places. As you walk, we encourage you to make traces for the an/archive in whatever creative practice/medium you feel most comfortable with. This could look like: writing a short

piece describing a scene, an object, or a collusion of things that you encounter; photographing things you find such as, places, arrangements of objects, or ruderal plant life; drawing a picture or a map; recording a soundscape. Once we all reconvene, we can share these “traces” of the event, and collect them together into an an/archive so they may be processually and creatively fed-forward.



Figures

1. DESIRE PATHS

Desire paths are worn into the ground by repeated use. The record histories of movement, tending to a direction. Even without knowing where they lead, their presence invites you to follow.

2. PAINTED COLORS/ GRAFFITI

Sometimes by-places even evolve their own signs, hidden paths marked with specific colours. Colours free to be taken up in novel processes, and repeated elsewhere, proliferating a complex network of affective currents. You just have to follow the signs.





3. CRACKS

In between buildings, spidering through concrete beams, or making way for weeds to break through the asphalt, cracks point towards incipient becomings cresting out of the surround. Look towards cracks in the old to pull you towards the new, let yourself linger in the spaces in-between.

4. BRAMBLES

Often disregarded as invasive, or avoided out of fear of cuts, brambles are the rising up of resistant life, hiding from view all kinds of features and creatures, in contrast to the flat, open planes of concrete and asphalt. Don't be afraid to look a little closer, find a way around or through, if it's not too difficult, who knows what finds shelter there.



5. CIGARETTE BUTTS

Cigarette butts are rarely unaccompanied, very often they lead to chairs, jugs, garbage cans or other informal infrastructure constructed by past wanderers, looking for a place to take a break or get away from things. Even the useless discarded waste of long-gone strangers pulls and is pulled into new worlds.



Notes



Doing STS stages accessible and collaborative opportunities for play and learning with science and technology studies and affect via ordinary and DIY practice. We host free public workshops, book clubs, and research jams to experiment with writing, walking, mapping, zinemaking, textile and papercrafting, fermenting, composting, and other modes of making. We actively develop methods of care and anticolonial science and tech literacies with an emphasis on how emergent global complexities are made and experienced in small, local practices that include messiness, hunches, and mistakes.

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