

How to be an explorer of the world:

Your primary task is to document and observe the world around you as if you've never seen it before. Take notes. Collect things you find on your travels. Document your findings. Notice patterns. Copy. Trace. Focus carefully on one thing at a time. Record what you are drawn to.

Be a collector: Develop your life museum

The tendency to collect and document is similar to the work of an ethnographer. Ethnography. N. The documentation and analysis of a particular culture through field research.

Everything is interesting:

1. Always be looking (notice the ground beneath your feet).
2. Consider everything alive & animate.
3. Everything is interesting (look closer).
4. Alter your course often.
5. Observe for long durations (and short ones).
6. Notice the stories going on around me.
7. Notice patterns, make connections.
8. Document your findings (field notes) in a variety of ways.
9. Incorporate indeterminacy.
10. Observe movement.
11. Create a personal dialogue with your environment. Talk to it.
12. Trace things back to their origins.
13. Use all of your sense in your investigations.

Methods of investigation:

Our perception of things can be altered simply by the angle we choose to look at something.

An average tree looks very different depending on if we view it from far away or close up. It changes again if we look at it as a colour palette. Maybe you decide to study it in separate parts – the leaves, the bark, the growth patterns, and the root system. You could also choose to see how a tree functioned in a community (as a meeting place), or anecdotally – what stories do the people who live around it have to tell? Who planted it? What sounds does the tree make? What does the space around the tree look like? What is it made of? How does the tree change visually over the course of a day? A year?

Creativity arises from our ability to see things from many different angles. Often “the aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity (we are often unable to notice something before our own eyes)” – Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Ways of seeing:

The following list includes a few of the methods that you can use in your investigations. You can make decisions to look at things in a variety of different ways at any time. This is only a partial list, you can add to it yourself as you go.

Sight, sound, smell, touch, movement, shape, texture, function, symbol, language, (definition, words), subjectively, objectively, in comparison, contrast, negative space, symmetrically, colour, in parts, anecdotally (as a story), historically, artistically, scientifically, morally, diachronically (across time), synchronically (one point in time), metaphysically, contextually, culturally, politically, ritualistically, aesthetically, micro, macro, in multiple, alone, 2D, 3D, abstractedly, mythically, directionally, linearly, as a habitat, as a device, light-heartedly, as a sign.

A list of things to document and collect:

Your collections and research should be made up of things to respond to. This list is just a leaping off point for investigation:

Round things	Grids
Textures	Nests
Flat things	Rubber bands
Cracks	Dirt
Things that surprise you	Cloud shapes
Shadows	Overheard conversations
Thread	Moss
Dreams	Paper
Mud	Lint
Smells	Growth patterns
Things from trees	Air
Fabric	Semi-circles
Long skinny things	Apologies
Colours	Soft sounds
Shells	Sticky tings
Stains	Lists
Things that decay	Detritus
Wax	Flat tings
Coffee cups	Wrinkles
Off cuts	Found photos
Left overs	Plastic things
Words	Impressions
Feathers	Other people's stories
Letters	Pen lines
Signatures	Pencil rubbings
Opposites	
Grasses	
Fruit stickers	
Maps	
Ideas	
Food	
Things that melt	
Reflections	
Stickers	
Seedpods	
Numbers	
Found faces	
Packaging	
Residue	
Junk mail	
Absurd things	
Water	
Scratches	
Knots	
Sticks	
Arrows	
Vessels	
Shoe soles	
Manhole covers	
Sugar packages	
Things in the sky	
Really tiny things	
Questions	
Things that look like other things	

