



## Idit Elia Nathan

Notes from the podcast interview by **Andrew Stuck**: Recorded in February 2015, on a walk around Hampstead in London not far from where Idit's family lived during the Second World War. The route followed was determined by a throw of a dice. These notes have been published in July 2015 on <http://www.talkingwalking.net> to coincide with the publication of Idit's artist's book *Please Watch U R Head*, by Marmalade publishers of Visual Culture at IMT Gallery, which offers a handheld virtual tour of Jerusalem and is designed to evoke walking.

Idit was brought up in Israel in the 1960s, her memories of playing in the streets of Jerusalem either side of the Six Day War have frequently influenced her thinking and actions, on how she, her children and all of us can and might 'play the city'.

Idit has exhibited and presented work in galleries based on documenting her seven walks through Jerusalem along with other artworks that link play and interminable conflict. Believing that playfully limiting a walk often generates creativity and unexpected encounters, she often works with fellow artist Helen Stratford as Play the City now or Never seeking ways to disrupt people's movements through the city to reclaim some of its spaces through play. Concurrently, she is completing a PhD titled *Art of Play in Zones of Conflict* - the case of Israel Palestine.

In 2015 Idit produced a limited edition die entitled *Walk Anywhere Anytime* proposing a different way of looking at a city. The play die was exhibited at *Footnotes Playing Dead*, at Standpoint Gallery (at the time the interview was recorded): <http://www.standpointlondon.co.uk/gallery/2015/idit-nathan/> The exhibition was a culmination of 7 years of work on play and conflict, including *Seven Walks in a Holy City* (2011), a project which saw her walk in Jerusalem in order to collect images as postcard art, and to establish whether it was possible to walk through the city without being aware of its divisive conflict and its contested sites. A video documenting the walks titled *7 Walks in 28 Minutes* (2013) was made in collaboration with James Murray-White: <https://vimeo.com/70270505> Additionally, 49 images produced as post cards, 7 from each walk, were thematically curated and are still available for purchase on Idit's website. During the walks, Idit kept a blog, posting 'reports' at the end of each walk, which prompted some intriguing comments: [http://www.iditnathan.org.uk/SW\\_Blog/SW\\_Blog.html](http://www.iditnathan.org.uk/SW_Blog/SW_Blog.html)

Idit describes her childhood play experiences as itinerant and taking place in a 'feral place' - memories of a place before, during, and after it was a battlefield, as a space which offered more freedom to walk around - and where almost anything might turn into a play thing. Idit blogged about her recollections of feral play in *Play I Saw Today* ([http://www.iditnathan.org.uk/iditnathan.org.uk/PIST\\_Blog/PIST\\_Blog.html](http://www.iditnathan.org.uk/iditnathan.org.uk/PIST_Blog/PIST_Blog.html))

Since 2012 Idit is has been intermittently collaborating with Helen Stratford whom she met while working on a project exploring how children play in contemporary art spaces, for *Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination*: <http://www.cambridgecandi.org.uk/projects/reimagine/childrentakethelead#chil>. Helen and Idit were artists in residence at METAL: <http://www.metalculture.com/> - where they will be walking and talking to local residents in Peterborough (2015) and Southend (2016) in order to develop an app (*funded by Arts Council grant*) to be made available as free download on google play as well as App store. The pair have also walked and played in many other places across the UK such as Bristol and Sunderland where their playful and low tech walks have inspired many to re-discover familiar places afresh.

Idit Elia Nathan's website: <http://www.iditnathan.org.uk/iditnathan.org.uk/welcome.html>

Play the City Now or Never: <http://playthecitynowornever.com/>



Buy one of Idit's limited edition play die , artists book and postcards at: <http://www.iditnathan.org.uk/reditnathan.org.uk/Editions.html>

**Idit Elia Nathan's recommendation for a walk is:**

Walk anywhere anytime, set yourself some limitations to see and experience even the most familiar route in new ways and always question - and wherever possible challenge in playful ways - the political paradigm that governs the space you are walking through.



**What has Idit Nathan been doing since our interview?**

“Since July 2015 (when podcast was recorded) Idit's walking related book Please Watch U R You Head has been exhibited in numerous exhibitions in UK and Europe. Her Walk Anywhere Anytime play die has been the focal point of several walking presentations such as Art, Language Location (2015) in Cambridge, Collisions (2016) – a Performance research festival at Central School of Speech and Drama in London as well as for Walk Exchange (2016) London and New York.

Idit's film 7 Walks in 28 Minutes has recently (2017) been screened as part of *Metageography: Space - Image – Action* exhibition at Pushkin House, London.

Most of Idit's recent walking related artworks have been with Play the City Now or Never who have since July 2015 launched their App as planned. The pair have also worked in Cambridge, launching their App Play Cambridge Now or Never! at the Junction's Watch Out Festival in 2017. They have also been commissioned by the National Theatre in London (2016/17) to lead several Lightbulb Walks exploring the theatre's unique building and the spaces around it and in Summer 2017 they have walked and played Yorkshire Sculpture Park to which they will return in 2018 to launch their mobile , walking and playing artwork.”

For updates on Idit's practice visit her website on: <http://www.iditnathan.org.uk/welcome.html>  
And for updates in Play the City Now or Never go to: <http://playthecitynowornever.com/>