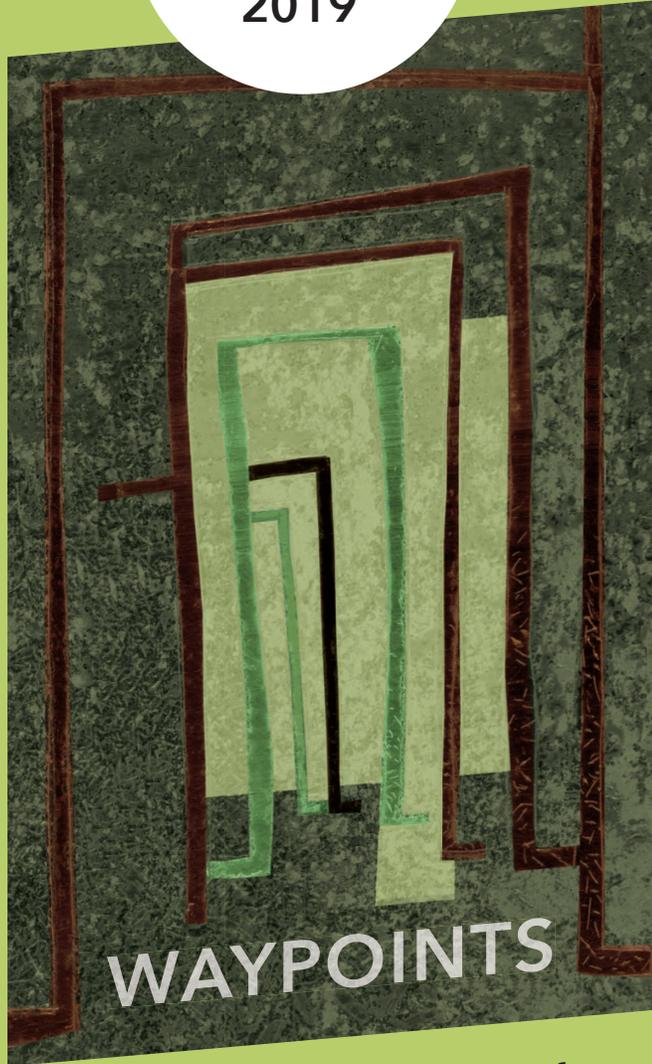


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WAYPOINTS

TOWARDS AN ECOLOGY OF
POLITICAL MINDFULNESS

Phil Cohen



Towards an ecology of
political mindfulness

Phil Cohen
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'Bringing together
the joyful wit and steely
wisdom of his writing over
recent years, this book is
nothing less than brilliant.'

Lynne Segal.

Author of
'Radical Happiness:
Moments of
Collective Joy'

WAYPOINTS: Towards an ecology of political mindfulness

by Phil Cohen

We are living through disturbed and disturbing times in which the maps drawn by political scientists no longer make sense of what is happening on the ground. Against this background the propagandists of neo-liberal individualism urge us to cultivate 'resilience' and 'mindfulness' as a way of seizing and surviving the present moment. Mindfulness in particular has been popularised as a way of promoting well-being by enabling people suffering from anxiety or depression to become more aware of internal mental states and their relation to external circumstances.

But what if this concept is applied not just to the adaptive strategies of an individual psyche but to the state of health of the body politic? It might then help us focus more precisely on how the stresses and strains of our everyday lives are connected to the social structures we inhabit. It might, for example, help us understand more concretely how issues, of race, gender, generation and class shape the most intimate registers of our being in the world.

From this starting point, the book charts a journey, at once intellectual and existential, across the fault lines of our conflicted society and divided selves. It brings together writings occasioned by recent political and personal events in an attempt to grasp their inter-connection in what is flashing past before it disappears into a fog of reminiscence or rhetoric. Many of the pieces collected here are this kind of auto-ethnographic reportage. Others, more essayistic in form, step back to think more strategically about some of the deeper processes at work in our increasingly uncivil society.

The first part of the book traces the seismic shifts taking place in the landscape of British politics, culminating in the Brexit vote, focussing on their cultural and ideological underpinnings. This is followed by a series of engagements with actual, mostly urban, landscapes, as they change underfoot, and suggests some possible ways of notating that encounter both at home and away. The next section explores personal memoryscapes of love and loss and their implications for understanding the dislocated times we are living through. The book concludes with a series of essays about the contemporary conditions of cultural production as these inform the poesis of singular arts practices.

Across these topics, Phil Cohen begins to map out an ecology of critical awareness as a timely antidote to the mindlessness currently being promoted through our political culture with its knee jerk responses to the multiple crises we face.

394 pages 133x203mm perfect bound RRP: £20 Publication date: October 2019
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CONTENTS

Introduction: On Being 'Woke'

Part One - Changing Political Cultures

Brexit and the Island Story - A Fatal Attraction

To Vote, Perchance to Dream: Moments in the Great Moving Left (or Is It Right?) Show

Mad Dogs and Englishmen:

The EU Referendum and Its Other Scene

1968' and the Politics of Memory

On Translating Politics: The Legacy of French Situationism

Part Two - Thinking Places, Travelling Stories

Crossing the Borderlands: The Dialectics of Trespass

There Goes the Labourhood: An Urban Triptych

A Twisted Thread: Imagining the Working-class City

Glass Ceilings: In Memory of a Pioneering Urbanist

Living the Dream: A Letter from Paris

Pictures from a Not Quite Gone City

In Search of the Antipodean

Part Three - Counter Finalities

To Seek Within the Inferno That Which Is Not

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: Threnody for Stuart Hall

Our Dear Icarus

In Place of Kaddish: A Letter for Ste

Two Funerals and a Strange Conjunction

For Those Orphaned Late

Santa with(out) Clause IV : Or, Socialism Is Not Just for Christmas

Atishoo, Atishoo, We All Fall Down: Some Reflections on Body Politics

Waiting Games People Play

Part Four - Cultural Formations

Living with Painting

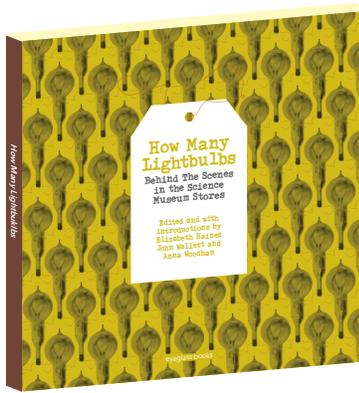
Graphologies

Are We That Name? An Essay on Pseudonyms

Black Atlas: The Poetics of Counter-Mapping

The Occasions of Poetry

End notes and Index



How Many Lightbulbs Behind the Scenes in The Science Museum Stores

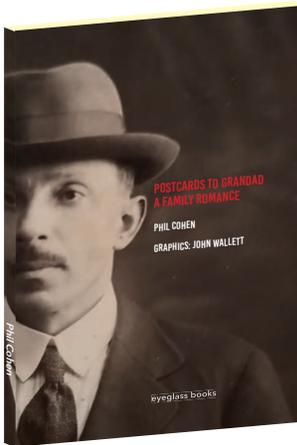
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'You come in this place and it's like the end of Raiders of the Lost Ark, when you turn the lights on with a clunk and gradually everything looms up out of the darkness and people go "Oh wow...!"' **Ben Russell, Curator, Science Museum Group**

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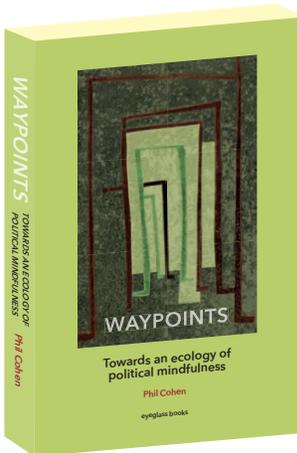
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