

ALEKSANDRA MIR / NAMING TOKYO PART II

The idea is based on the fact that westerners often complain that Tokyo has no street names and that you can't find your way around without a guide who simply knows the logic of his own city. I always thought that was such a superb form of local resistance—no key! So I felt it would be interesting to start naming the streets of Tokyo with names from western culture and society, to help us around. I am sure the people of Tokyo will like it too!

Needless to say, Tokyo is large and I will need thousands and thousands of names, even for the central area. I have started by asking my friends for help by providing me with a short list of names on any coherent theme, that I will apply to the streets. In return and as thanks, they will have a neighborhood named after themselves.

The names will be grouped around any poignant literary or political moment of the west, or of any the most banal elements of our society, that then will be reflected back in the physical neighborhoods of Tokyo. I have asked people to follow their fancy and stick close to their heart. Names in any western language will do, but I will leave out any reference to Street, Rue, Calle, etc., keeping only the name as such.

After the first installment of the work, the map at the Palais de Tokyo this summer, we will continue to actually try to implement these names into common use. This can happen by a variety of means—producing more publications of guidebook type, starting to refer to popular tourist spots with the new street names, infiltrating advertising and community planning, and possibly and hopefully even starting to put up street signs on location. It may take forever, but it starts with a blank map and the very first nominations. I can't wait. - Aleksandra Mir