Symposium

# WALKING PLACES

Conference Proceedings

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**COORD.**
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# EDITORIAL

This is a collection of some of the papers that were presented during the Walking Places Symposium held at Centro de Informação Urbana de Lisboa (the Centre for Urban Information of Lisbon) in January 2019. The symposium was hosted by DINÂMIA'CET-IUL – the Centre for Socio-economic and Territorial Studies at the Iscte - University Institute of Lisbon - and supported by the Centre of Urban and Community Research (CUCR) at Goldsmiths College, University of London. It was organised by Carla Duarte, PhD candidate in Architectural Studies and member of DINÂMIA'CET-IUL, and Anita Strasser, PhD candidate in Visual Sociology and member of CUCR.

The idea for the symposium occurred whilst sitting on the upper deck of a London bus, travelling from one venue to the next during the Urban Encounters conference in London in 2017. We started to talk about Anita's mountain project in Austria, then about photography and walking as a research practice. Walking shapes an essential part of our research practice and how we understand urban and rural landscapes. As the bus was winding its way through the narrow streets of London, our minds were transported to the streets of Lisbon and to Carla's PhD project Walking in Valverde, which documents the

history of the old Valverde Road – an ancient road that connects the city centre of Lisbon to the north of the city. This sparked the idea of a symposium on walking in Lisbon. We spent the rest of the journey planning the panels, suggesting speakers, themes, dates and activities. By the time we arrived at the next venue, we pretty much had a finished plan for what was to become the symposium Walking Places, bar minor adjustments. It was the most productive bus journey ever.

Walking has recently re-gained importance as a major element in the construction and experience of urban territories, being recognised as playing a crucial role in helping us understand physical, social and cultural spaces. Walking is central to life; in fact, despite all the different modes of transport, it is still the most common form of movement across the globe – whether for pleasure, work or survival, for migration, for running errands, and/or other reasons. In all its forms, walking is central to our knowledge of the world and it is through walking that we a develop a deeper relationship with our surroundings.

Walking as a research methodology that tries to make sense of environments and of the everyday practices of dwellers has also re-gained currency.

Walking enables us to contemplate our bodies in movement and can evoke emotional responses, memories and philosophical considerations. It can lead to questions of existence or reflections on life beyond the everyday in search for "truth". Walking is also a way of observing and being with others, allowing us to better understand the embodied experience of social life. It can take us to new places, stimulating attentiveness that enables us to ask questions and offer new perspectives on places. Walking encourages us to engage with our surroundings with all our senses, leading to new and different ways of knowing.

This symposium explored walking as a research practice, discussing some of the conceptual and practical aspects of walking through a diverse selection of themes and projects that apply walking either as an analytical and methodological tool, an art practice or a performance, as an element of town planning and community care, or simply as a philosophical study that explores its impact on human life. It aimed to demonstrate the importance of walking not only as the most democratic and simplest form of moving through spaces, but also as a way of positioning oneself in the world and one's surroundings, in urban or rural territories.

After introductions by ourselves and Dr Paula André – Assistant Professor of the Department of Architecture and Urbanism at ISCTE-IUL and researcher at DINÂMIA'CET-IUL, we started the day with a keynote from Dr Alex Rhys-Taylor, Senior Lecturer and Researcher at CUCR, which looked at the relationship between walking, the rhythms of urban life, and social research. He argues that, in most cities, a significant slice of everyday life still unfolds at the speed of walking. Then, Carla Duarte gave us an overview of how the landscape of the Valverde Way has developed over decades. Her talk was followed by Dr Sérgio Barreiros Proença, Assistant Professor

of Urbanism at the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Lisbon, who uses walking as a pedagogical tool to stimulate artistic creations and architectural compositions. He provided an overview of a module he teaches in the first year of study that uses walking and photography as a way of getting to know the city in which the students are studying. The panel finished with Dr Emma Jackson, Senior Lecturer and Researcher at CUCR, and her call for an alternative agenda for thinking and writing about walking in the city from a situated and feminist perspective. This talk attracted women from diverse backgrounds and from a walking collective that is concerned about the inequalities experienced by female pedestrians.

The final panel of the day concentrated on walking as an artistic practice. Luísa Salvador, a PhD candidate in Contemporary Art History at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of NOVA University of Lisbon, provided an overview of the interaction between Art and Landscape and how they connect with walking, examining the works of Vito Acconci, Hamish Fulton, Richard Long and Francis Alps. This was followed by Anita Strasser's narration of walking across the Stone Sea, a mountain range in the Austrian and Bavarian Alps, and how her experience of walking is intermingled with the landscape and oral histories she has recorded. The final talk was given by Jennifer Roberts, who draws parallels between her work as a psychotherapist and as a photographer. Applying a phenomenological, sensory approach to her photographic practice, she tries to understand her relationship to the immediate surroundings.

The next day began with a talk by Dr David S. Vale, Assistant Professor at the Lisbon School of Architecture, whose research focuses on the integration of land use and transportation, and different transport modes. His insights into the

concept of complementary walking, the walking necessary when accessing other travel modes, led to some interesting discussions around urban planning and public spaces, as well as mobility and disability. David argues that the notion of pedestrian accessibility and the walkability of cities, particularly Lisbon, is not really understood or translated into the built environment. This was followed by Mónica Diniz, Head of Prevention, Security and International Relations of the Lisbon Municipal Police, who spoke of the need to build safer communities through effective and trustful relationships between police and citizens, which are built up through daily on-foot patrols and listening to people's problems and acting upon them. This led to questions regarding the democratic involvement of marginalised communities in decisions involving their local areas.

The day finished with a walk down the Valverde Way guided by Carla. It is the old (Roman) road that connects what is now the north of the city with the city centre. The architecture of small, low buildings that used to be workers' houses lines this narrow, mostly cobbled road. Unlike Paris, where the Haussmann project destroyed most of the historic centre, the historic streets of Lisbon survived the urbanisation of the 19th Century.

Instead, a big boulevard was built parallel to the old Valverde Way. This has created a multi-layered city with various architectural styles and spaces on numerous levels, creating a patchwork of historic and modern streetscapes.

The symposium drew a diverse and international audience, with people travelling from the UK, Scandinavia and from across Portugal. It brought together Portuguese and UK academics and practitioners from a range of backgrounds such as Sociology, Architecture and Urban Planning, Community Policing, Art (in particular Photography), Education and Psychology. Unfortunately, not all speakers were able to submit a paper for these proceedings, but the papers published here cover some of the main issues regarding walking as a research practice.

*Anita Strasser and Carla Duarte, November 2020*

# Walking, Cadence and Urban Rhythms

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## Abstract

This paper is the written version of a talk on the relationship between the cadence of walking and the rhythms of music, speech and thought. It is an effort to think through the phenomenological experience of walking and the ways that this experience is afforded by urban life and reflected in culture. In doing so, the paper offers a caution against the celebration of transhuman speed, while advocating for both social research and urban design that resonate with the rhythmic cadences of walking.

## Introduction

This paper is an effort to explore the connection between thinking and walking, with a particular focus on the rhythm of walking. From monastic prayer walks to Aristotle in his agora, through transcendent aboriginal 'walkabouts' and into twenty-first century experiments in 'mobile methods', the act of walking has repeatedly been taken up as a means to exploring existential questions. In both Eastern philosophy's Buddhist meditation walks (*kinhin*) and their Western counterparts (see, for instance Rousseau, [1782] 2011; Nietzsche, [1908] 2009) entreaties to walk present pedestrian motion as a route to enlightening introspection. Indeed, the philosophers clearly have a point. Many of us, in fact, when faced with a particularly stressful problem or the need for a creative solution, have stumbled upon the act of pacing as a means to locating a 'way out'. Pacing back and forth is a way of moving both through space, but also through one's own thoughts; connecting disparate ideas through motion. This works in terms of cohering images and narratives in one's own imagination, but also as a method for communicating ideas and stories to others.

The association between walking and the introspective pursuit of knowledge typified both philosophical and literary writing on walking for centuries. It is really only during the last century however, with the emergence of the modern city, that 'walking scholarship' developed a more 'outward' facing agenda. Typified by the *flânerie* of Walter Benjamin (Benjamin & Tiedemann, 1999) and, later, Michel de Certeau (1988), walking was re-framed as a quasi-political practice for both understanding and intervening in the relationship between modernity and the individual. Particularly in critical urbanism, walking was re-evaluated, not for what it told us about ourselves, but for what walking (as a research method) revealed about modern and explicitly urban forms of sociality. More recently, through work such as Kate Moles' reflections on the ambulatory threads that entwine place and identity together (Moles, 2008), or Tom Hall and Rob Smith's ethnography of mobile street patrols (Hall & Smith, 2013), Andrew

Clark's shoulder to shoulder interviews with young people (Clark in Bates & Rhys-Taylor, 2017) or Tim Edensor's circumambulations through industrial ruins (Edensor, 2005), walking as a practice for understanding late modernity has come to fruition. Through walking *alongside* others, we see better how vistas of both opportunity and risk are mapped out onto space. In tracing another's footsteps, we understand more fully the extent to which human relationships are made, not *in situ*, but rather, on the hoof. And through mobile methods we learn about the significance of various real and imagined barriers, walls, entrances and bridges, as well as how these relate to social structures.

I want to argue that both the introspective affordances of walking familiar to philosophers, and the more practical sociological understanding that emerges from walking-as-a-research-method, emerge out of walking's unique phenomenology. That is, they emerge from the specific ways in which we, as humans, generally experience walking. More precisely, I want to argue that walking's utility in the social sciences is directly related to the cadence of pedestrian movement. I say this because, if we listen closely, pedestrian cadences are precisely the rhythms at which a great many 'human' elements of our world are lived. From the metrical structure of the stories we orate (Couper-Kuhlen, 1993: 100–109) to the pulse of thoughts that drift through discursive consciousness, to the sequences of tasks we put together in any given day, more often than not, these phenomena unfold at a beat that matches the pulse of bi-pedal movement. Moving with, and paying special attention to, this pulse becomes a way of inhabiting and understanding it.

## Walking through Acceleration

To say that walking pace is *the* pulse of modern urban living might seem counterintuitive; not least because so few would associate contemporary urbanity with the ambulatory pace of a pedestrian. The last century has, after all, seen humans moving ever faster both between, and within, cities. The 1900s were, remember, the century that saw humans exceeding the speed of sound in their transit between cities. More prosaically today, even with Concorde grounded, information flows through urban life at lightning speeds every single second of the day.

From the very start of this acceleration in transport and communication, futurists such as FT Marinetti openly embraced the 'grandeur of speed' and celebrated transcendence of yesterdays' merely human rhythm.

> *"Man began by despising the isochronal, cadenced rhythm, identical with the rhythm of his own stride, of great rivers [...] Man mastered horse, elephant and camel to display his divine authority through an increase in speed [...] From space man stole electricity and then the liquid fuels [...] [and] shaped the metals he had conquered and made flexible with fire. He thereby assembled an army of slaves, dangerous and hostile but sufficiently domesticated to carry him swiftly over the curves of the earth'.*
>
> *The New Religion-Morality of Speed, F.T. Marinetti, 1916 9 in Flint and Marinetti, 1979: 94.*

Today's twenty-first century futurists, accelerationists and rocketeers are no different to Marinetti in their fetishization of speed. For these 'heroic' visionaries the speeding up of urban rhythms via technology is both desirable and inevitable. Sure, they see the disasters immanent to an ever-accelerating life. For them, however, the

only way out is by getting *ahead* of disaster itself through more speed. This does not merely apply to entrepreneurial astro-speculators or philosophers of catastrophe. Any time spent around smart city evangelists reveals the extent to which many urban professionals also have bought into and promoted the vision of accelerated urban life. At the planning side of things, acceleration entails supplementing human deliberation with real-time algorithmic commands. In terms of the concrete city, acceleration means installing sensors and processors that decide what to do right there, right then while nudging transit speeds ever upwards both within and between cities, historically at the expense of the pedestrian.

Yet despite speed-of-light communication technologies and speed-of-sound transport, despite the abundance of pro-automobile, anti-pedestrian infrastructures, despite the fantasies of erstwhile futurists and their contemporary pretenders, a great deal of any city's most valuable activities *still take place at walking pace*. For instance, at either end of *any* journey, be it by car, plane, or train, for most of us there is still a walk to our final destination. But this literal walking is not all I mean to refer to. Even while travelling at supersonic speeds, or communicating in real time across the planet, or otherwise while sat motionless, our conscious experience often still unfolds *at walking pace*. The rhythm of the narratives we listen to on our podcasts, the beat of the music we listen to, the stories we tell each other and the thoughts that roll through our minds all, more often than not, unfurl with an ambulatory rhythm. Let me walk you through this point.

The speed of the average walker, it turns out, is around 5kmph... Although in an act of benevolence urban planners often assume an average walking pace of around 3.6kmph (Steiner & Association, 2006: 223). Despite this act of generosity toward the less mobile amongst us, there is still an obvious

assumption at the heart of this number; based, as it is, on a normative 'able' body. This is a problem insofar as we know that walking pace seems to vary – at the very least – from country to country. For instance, in a piece of comparative research into national paces-of-life (which supposedly measured average walking speeds) Brazil and Romania appear to be in the lower walking-speed leagues, while Ireland, Holland and Britain, on the other hand, are in the premier league of pacers (Levine & Norenzayan, 1999).

Taking the nations as units of analysis, however, is rarely ever a good idea. Not least, in this case, the figure likely obfuscates the internal differences within each nation; perhaps between country and city, between different cities. People in London, for instance, might walk faster than those in Loughborough. This would certainly be the prediction of one of the most firmly held tenets of pedestrian science; that pace seems to increase in correlation with increase in urban population sizes (H. Bornstein & Bornstein, 1976). The Bornsteins, in fact, drew on the work of sociologist Georg Simmel to explain these differences in pace, arguing that ultimately it was the increased sensory stimuli of populous cities that precipitated speedier walkers (H. Bornstein & Bornstein, 1976; M. H. Bornstein, 1979). But the correlation between pace of life and population size might also, quite plausibly, be attributed to the over-representation of fast walkers (i.e. young people) in large cities' populations (Wirtz & Ries, 1992).

The root of the slight-but-demonstrable differences between different cities' pedestrian speeds is an interesting question. That all having been said, the speed of the walker is far less interesting for this discussion than the cadence of the walker. The cadence of the walk is, of course, related to the speed of walking. But it is not reducible to it. On the contrary, individuals can walk with exactly the same cadence, and indeed often do, but achieve

different speeds depending on their height, weight and gait. An average speed cannot, therefore, be easily translated into an average pace. Calculating walking cadence requires a different methodology but it is not *too* hard and, as a consequence, we can apparently assert that – in lab settings – the 'average person's' walking cadence has a modal range of between 110-120 steps per minute. Or 115 steps per minute if you prefer shorthand (Winter, 1991). It is *this* cadence, a pulse of 115 steps per minute, that I argue is so central to walking's sociological significance, and connects walking-as-a-methods to cultural studies, to urbanism and to philosophy. 115 bpm is, roughly speaking, the aforementioned pulse at which a not insignificant portion of human life seems to unfold.

This point could be illustrated by a bit of a musical detour. Consider either of the following songs: *Young Hearts Run Free* by Candi Staton, Grandmaster Flash and Melle Mel's *White Lines*. If you can, imagine them both. You could, in fact, sequence these together quite neatly, with each track segueing into the next because each of these recordings unfolds at a pace of the average walker. 115 beats-per-minute (bpm). On the upper side of those tracks, at a pacier 120 bpm, you have Madonna's *Like A Virgin*. More slowly at around 100 beats per minute, you have the throbbing strides of Abba's *Dancing Queen*. Slower than that, dropping right down through hip-hop's standard of between 85-100 bpm, you get to the mellifluous basslines of dub, which hover around 70-80 bpm.

Importantly, this range of beats-per-minute across popular music genres maps remarkably neatly onto human walking paces and their variation. For reference, dub soundtracks an infuriating dawdle at as few as 70 steps per minute, hip-hop a gentle stroll at around 85 steps per minute, straight-up walking to disco beats at around 115 steps per minute, and *really* walking at 120 steps per minute. This synchrony between walking and musical

rhythm is not merely confined to 'modern' music. A similar range of pulses can also be found in classical music. In classical music, the analogy with walking is in fact explicit. The phrase *andante* in musical notation literally means 'at walking pace'. Slightly faster, *moderato*, is referred to by musicians as being more of a 'march'. This is the beat range of not just Western music but, seemingly, the entirety of global music which, leaving aside the amphetamine horror of gabba-techno, generally falls within the narrow beat range of 'between 83 and 140 bpm' (Roeder & Tenzer, 2012: 91).

In his remarkable essay, Architecture and the Senses, Juhani Pallasmaa contends that "the timeless task of architecture is to create embodied and lived metaphors that concretize and structure our being in the world" (Pallasmaa, 2005: 73). As humanist architecture speaks to the rhythm of the body, so too does timeless music. In this respect, bodies do not just move to the beat dictated by their environment. The beat or our environment clearly moves to the body and synchronises with our existent gait. This is precisely because that which speaks most effectively to us pertains to the cadence of the human body and echoes the beat of human existence.

But this pulse of between 80 and 140 bpm is not simply a resonance between walking and music. It also reverberates through speech (in English at least). Of course, everyday speech, not unlike complex musical scores, has multiple rhythms pulsing throughout it. However, it is striking that when linguists analysed the gap between the main stress points in a sample piece of English speech, they found a rhythmic gap between stresses of an average of 0.58 seconds (Couper-Kuhlen, 1993: 106–108). Or in other words, the speech had an average cadence of around 103 beats per minute. Which is to say, the rhythm of human phenomenological experience, the pace of perception, as reflected in the music that speaks to us *and* the language we

use to communicate, falls within the normative cadence range of walking humans.

Beyond speech and music are a range of other pulses in the city which, perhaps unsurprisingly, also fall in step with city dwellers' bi-pedal beat. Even the most sophisticated 'smart city', a great number of the assorted beeps, buzzes and blinks of urban life in fact fall within the range of walking pace. The engaged tone on a phone line. The indicator lights on a car. The SMS bleeps on a mobile. The buzzer that alerts us to closing subway doors. The signal to cross at the crosswalk. Or the siren of reversing rubbish trucks. In the recordings I have gathered, all of these sound off somewhere between 110 and 125 bpm. This seems a sensible design feature given that these are the rhythms that seem proven to speak most effectively to us (London, 2012: 28).

Taking these observations about the synchrony between the audible rhythms of city life and the walking pace of city dwellers, we might understand walking-as-a-method as a means of *tuning in*. Not only does walking move the researcher's body along the threads that connect disparate elements of an urban assemblage. Walking allows the body to resonate with the natural frequencies of everyday life.

Yet, despite many of the more pro-social aspects of the city having evolved out of pedestrian activity, despite us being most at home just below 5kmph, 115 steps per minute, walking is rarely at the heart of any contemporary city's master plan. Moreover, it is also the case that, increasingly, the ability to walk and the benefit from the fruits of walking in a city are becoming a luxury as city centres become the preserve of wealthier residents, leaving suburban commuters in their cars. This is a shame not least because we know the riches that have historically come from walking, from tuning in to the city; the rich sociality that emerges from

pacing alongside another, the understanding of space that comes from stumbling through it, the flashes of inspiration that come from plodding one foot in front of another, the relief of walking our way out of a problem. Using walking as a sociological method has helped to reveal the affordances of human motion, and its social, cultural and ecological significance. And in doing so, hopefully, it has helped to build a case for cities in which 'rights to the city' are first and foremost, the rights to walk in the city.

**Conclusion**

This paper has argued that if we are to understand the relationship between philosophical enquiry, sociological research into cities and walking, we need to pay attention to the phenomenological experience of walking. In particular, we need to pay attention to the cadence of pedestrian movement. The cadence of human walking, I have suggested, resonates with the pulse of music, speech, thought and action, and may even structure it. This is one reason that walking is such a fruitful activity for understanding one another and the world we live in, as well as ourselves. Walking is a means of tuning in to the city and the world around us. This is also a reason to encourage the development of walkable cities, which can only be more sociable, empathetic and humane than the accelerated city.

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# The Stone Sea: a walk through mountain research

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**tags**

sociological walking, mountaineering, phenomenology, affect, visual ethnography, visual sociology, photography

## Abstract

This visual and textual essay takes the reader on a walk across the Stone Sea – a mountain range in the Austrian and Bavarian Alps which I researched over the course of four years. The research itself concentrates on the every-day lives of people living and working in this mountain range during the summer season, using storytelling to draw out people's experiences and understanding of life in the Stone Sea. The accompanying photographs, informed by people's accounts and my own experience of walking in this mountain range, help create an intimate visual ethnography that provides insight into some of the complex issues of mountain life such as tradition, tourism, modernisation and environmental sustainability. This research could only be carried out through walking this difficult mountain terrain, tracing the footsteps of sheep farmers, hunters, mountain rescue teams, innkeepers and many others. Walking the same footpaths many times over in this weathered landscape of rock, in varying weather conditions, physical and mental states, and with people's narrative accounts in mind, has contributed to a better understanding of the political and social worlds of the people traversing this terrain on a regular basis. Through a phenomenological approach that shifts the focus onto movement, affect and memory, this essay intermingles the personal journey of my physical, emotional and visual experiences of mountaineering with the narrative accounts provided by others. It takes the reader on a geographical and metaphorical walk, a route through memories that connect to the present. It is a process where walking is a way of thinking and feeling through research and where research is a way of thinking and feeling through walking.

## Introduction

*The Stone Sea: a walk through mountain research* is part of a visual ethnography which researches and documents the everyday life and work practices of mountain folk living and working in the Stone Sea, a mountain range in the Austrian and Bavarian Alps. Although there is an abundance of chronicles, yearbooks and glossy mountain magazines that detail mountain tops, trails and treks and places to sleep, as well as celebrate the achievements of extreme (male) mountaineers, there is a distinct lack of ethnographic work that shifts the focus onto people living and working in the mountains and their everyday experiences. Through photographic and archival research, storytelling and walking, I have been documenting the social world of people inhabiting this mountain range in order to recognise their experiences and knowledges of mountain life and celebrate their versions of life and communities in the Stone Sea. As access is only on foot, the research process has necessitated regular walking of this terrain, intermingling the stories told with my own physical experience of being and walking in this mountain range. This visual and textual essay takes the reader on a geographical and metaphorical walk, a walk that connects the landscape with personal memories and experiences, and themes such as mountain tourism, loss of traditions, sustainability and landownership.



**Image I:**
The northern side of the Stone Sea, September 2018.
©Anita Strasser

## Different ways of walking in the mountains

I have been walking in the Stone Sea since my childhood. Two of my aunts were innkeepers for many years and my father was involved in helping out with deliveries, construction and rescues. I often went with him – many a time to complete treks in record speed to boast about it afterwards. My dad lived for the mountains, to escape the realities of life and enter a different realm of being, one which Austrian extreme mountaineer and academic Helga Peskoller terms 'BergDenken' (Mountain Thinking). *BergDenken* as a term represents the phenomenon of the intense desire to be in and on top of mountains, where the mind is emptied of rational thought and opened up for another way of thinking and being; a way of being that connects the mind and body with the materiality of the mountains (Peskoller, 1997: 9-11). *BergDenken* explains the lack of rational thinking in extreme mountaineers that regularly put their lives at risk: despite being aware of the dangers of death, the aforementioned phenomenon takes over the mind, spurning them on to ever greater heights. Nan Shepherd expands on the physiological element, saying that 'I am a mountain lover because my body is at its best in the rarer air of the heights and communicates its elation to the mind' (Shepherd, 2014: 7). According to her, the bodily lightness, or feyness, experienced in the heights leads one to subvert the will and supersede judgement, 'a malady of which the afflicted will never ask to be cured' (p. 8). The reason for that, Shepherd says, must be within the mountain itself. Peskoller argues that the intensity of standing on a high summit with panoptic views distances us from everyday life to such an extent that life and our human-ness become an abstraction, an abstraction the mountaineer becomes addicted to; hence the intense desire to be on top of a mountain. It reminds me of De Certeau's description of the view from the World Trade Centre: 'It transforms the bewitching world

by which one was "possessed" into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god' (De Certeau, 1984: 92). As such, standing on a summit is a form of power and resistance against the strains of everyday life, even if only momentarily. My father and his colleagues, many of whose experiences feature in this ethnography, were/are certainly addicted to the elevated views that enable them to temporarily get away from the grasp of everyday life.

In later years, I started walking the same paths with a different companion, my husband, at a much slower pace and much more aware of my physical and mental relationship to my surroundings. On one hand, *BergDenken*, this close connection between mind and body with the materiality of the mountains, is part of my ontological security, my inner sense of existence and mental stability, reflected in the regular desire to be in the mountains and my feyness when I am there. But whilst seeking to get away from the stresses of life, mountaineering for me is not to climb higher and higher to escape the realities of my life but actually to spend time reflecting on those realities. It is a way of looking inwards, of exploring my mind and grounding my thoughts (Solnit, 2002: 26). It is walking in the Nietzschean sense – 'a meditative practice through which access to rational and meaningful thought is achieved' (Bates & Rhys-Taylor, 2017: 1). It may seem contradictory to refer to Nietzsche's strolls, but one can engage in a practice of meditative walking in challenging Alpine terrain when not focused on climbing summits but rather on *being* in the mountain. Existential introspection stimulated by the elevated position, summit or not, sometimes feels as if standing at a somewhat paradoxical Archimedean point – looking at the totality of one's own reality by having physically distanced oneself from it while at the same time existing and experiencing as vividly as nowhere else (Rousseau, 1781/1953: 157).

The bodily lightness that Shepherd describes, the perfectly co-ordinated body and mind that allows one to walk securely in challenging terrain with a certain buoyancy, is something I only experience in the mountains. It is when body and mind reach such 'profound harmony [which is] deepening into something that resembles trance, that I discover most nearly what it is to *be'* (Shepherd, 2014: 106; original emphasis). Re-entering the realities of everyday life takes some readjustment, making me feel alien for a while.

The way I have experienced walking in the Stone Sea completely changed as I began this research, tracing the footsteps of sheep farmers,

conversations in 'their' place (Bates & Rhys-Taylor, 2017). This helped make sense of the Stone Sea and the political and social worlds of the people traversing it on a more regular basis. Sometimes I also walked without a particular destination, just 'to be with the mountain as one visits a friend' (Shepherd, 2014: 15). This intense immersion into the landscape helped develop a better understanding of my own physical and emotional experiences of mountaineering and the landscape of my mind (Solnit, 2002: 6). My experience (and many others') is a far cry from the heroic and very male narrative accounts of conquering higher mountain tops, of the thrill of danger and the



**Image II:**
At the western edges of the Stone Sea, September 2018.
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mountain rescue teams, hunters and others. Using mountaineering as a methodological tool, I began to explore this *weathered* landscape of rock (Ingold, 2011) in greater depth – walking in varying weather conditions, times and months, following suggested routes, walking with people and having

self-congratulatory stories of achieving the near impossible (Macfarlane, 2003: 71). Even the stories of female mountaineers who have only recently made it into the mountaineering literature despite some early pioneers (Runggaldier, 2011: 9) mirror

the extreme and dangerous achievements of their male counterparts, mostly ignoring the more sensuous experience of being in the mountains. Scottish writer Nan Shepherd, who wrote about her connection to the Cairngorms in Scotland in *The Living Mountain* in the 1940s (published in 1977 and only recently recognised as a seminal text), and Italian author Ingrid Runggaldier, whose book *Frauen im Aufstieg* (Women on the Ascent) was published in German in 2011, have contributed to addressing this gap.

Through being in the mountains regularly, the early fast-paced walks to peaks have been replaced by slow and considered circumambulation of the

mountains. It is a way of thinking, corresponding with, and trying to make sense of, the landscape I am walking in (Macfarlane, 2012; Ingold, 2013). Much of the thinking for this research is done on foot, in silence or out loud with my companion as we walk for hours, constantly changing altitude, pace and route, to search, as Robert Macfarlane puts it, 'for a route of the past, only to find oneself delivered again and again to the contemporary' (Macfarlane, 2012: xi). It is about the ways in which my research is informed through the physical landscapes in which I move and the emotional and thought landscapes which move through me (Solnit, 2002). As Ingold says, 'the only way one can



**Image III:**
Experienced female mountaineer and sheep farmer looking out for sheep on the Stone Sea in fog, September 2018.
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Stone Sea plateau (Macfarlane in Shepherd, 2014: xiv). Going out mountaineering has become more about going in (Muir in Macfarlane, 2012: 20); it is a research process that enables me to see, feel, be and know the mountain through my body and understand my mind through walking in the

really know things – that is, from the very inside of one's being – is through a process of self-discovery' (Ingold, 2013: 1). The ethnographic narrative which shapes the rest of this essay is a journey through the embodied practice of mountain research,

through a landscape of stories, memories and emotions, through the experience of walking in the weathered landscape of the Stone Sea.



**Image IV:**
On the plateau of the Stone Sea looking towards its southern peaks, June 2016.
©Anita Strasser

**A short journey across the Stone Sea**

It is 5 am. My bag is heavy. My body and mind feel tense – we have a 6-hour ascent ahead of us, the weather is cold and slightly unpredictable and there is still snow on the plateau after a long winter. Unlike the great explorers of the 17th and 18th centuries, and many explorers since, who seek 'pleasurable fear in the mountains' (Macfarlane, 2003: 73), I am more apprehensive about taking unnecessary risks. Of course, risk is relative and mountaineering is always connected to some risk. But much of the mountain literature focuses on deliberate risk-taking and self-improvement in

the world's highest or most dangerous mountains by the bravest, mostly male, mountain climbers in the world (ibid.). A mountain range like the Stone Sea, reachable within a few hours, with its highest peak at just above 2,650 metres and without snow during most summers, would not even be considered worthy a mention in the great mountaineering literature. And yet, each year many perish in the Stone Sea, mostly because they underestimate the terrain or the force of the weather. The weather can change within minutes, snow can cover the area overnight at the height of summer, fog can appear out of nowhere, making it impossible to find your way out of this vast area of rocky and weathered landscape. Getting caught

up in fog is my worst fear and I am always hyper-aware of changes in atmosphere, constantly checking the colour of the sky, cloud movements, changes in temperature and the smell in the air.

We reach the first hut in 2.5 hours; it is the hut which my aunts used to run in the 70s and 80s, and where I spent many weekends in my childhood. The path gently weaves upwards

of sync, with my body and legs urging to go faster and my head pulling me back. At this point, the reality of my health condition is too close and real to open up a space for *BergDenken*, feyness and meditative introspection, and my desire to be in the mountains is interrupted by the rationalisation of my condition. I enter a space of ontological *in*security, a minor existential crisis that challenges



**Image V:**
The mountain hut which was managed by family members.
September 2015.
©Anita Strasser

through pine forests, whose aroma makes me feel alive and at home upon inhalation. I know the path inside out, yet I need to walk slowly. I have developed severe migraines and mountaineering has become difficult as the pumping of the blood and the thinner air often result in me arriving ill, in being caught up in a different kind of fog – the migraine fog as I call it. I am aware of the battle between my head, which constantly reminds me of the need to slow down, and the rest of my body, which wants to use its full capacity. It is in contrast to the experience when body, mind and the world are aligned and in conversation with each other (Solnit, 2002: 5). I feel completely out

my subjectivity as a mountaineer. This generally lasts until my headache lifts and I feel stable again.

A lot has changed since the hut was in our family. All the goods used to be carried up by horses or men, and I remember my dad and others carrying about 70kg each. One of my aunts still reminisces about the camaraderie at that time, the joys of working together with people she could rely on. Despite making the delivery of goods easier, she laments the construction of the cable car at the end of the 70s, as it slowly dissolved community networks and 'the corrosion of character' of the mountain carrier (Sennett, 1998). "I had to say to my family

and friends, 'I don't need you anymore'", my aunt says. A friend of my aunt's was the last officially registered mountain carrier on a much more treacherous route, a post which, despite being over 50 years ago, is still an essential part of his sense of worth. Still, when he became an innkeeper on that route, he eventually set the construction of a cable car in motion to ease delivery. One of the wooden box-type cable cars from that time (there were four in total, one for each hut), designed to carry goods only, has since been replaced by a people carrier and another by a road. Although intended for deliveries only, it may only be a question of time for further modernisation and the transporting of people. This brings to mind Austrian writer Robert Seethaler's novel *A Whole Life* (2014), where the protagonist Andreas is full of pride when taking part in the construction of the first cable car in the Austrian mountains in the 1930s so that others can come and enjoy the mountains he loves and knows so well; only to watch in horror 50 years later at how torrents of tourists make their way up without the sense of reverence Andreas has for the ancient mountain. For him, the lack of respectful and embodied engagement with the mountain, symbolised by the wearing of casual clothes, trainers and the constant chatter and snapping of photographs, triggers a huge sense of melancholy and loss. Indeed, most mountain ranges near the Stone Sea (and in Austria) already transport masses of tourists up in cable cars, and it may only be a question of time until the Stone Sea is another destination for day-trippers. The trepidation of this moment is omnipresent in local mountain discourse.

Although relieved to have reached the first landmark, I cannot fully relax until I am safe at the final destination. We still need to walk through the Wild Valley to reach the crossing before descending into the plateau, which is anything but flat, to then navigate it to get to the next hut. This will take four



**Image VI:**
One of the original cable cars transporting goods to a hut in the Stone Sea, September 2015.
©Anita Strasser

hours. Once I am walking, I am fine, it is the sitting down and the anticipation of what is ahead that makes me slightly giddy. The final ascent to the crossing point is a steep climb with the help of iron cables and metal rungs. The weight of my bag is pulling me back and is dragging on my shoulders, my thighs ache from carrying my whole weight up the steep rocky steps, my palms are red and sore from holding onto the cables, my blood is pumping hard. I come to another point where I question my subjectivity as a mountaineer, until I reach the crossing and lay eyes on the Stone Sea in all its glory and vastness. For a brief moment I am in an exhilarated state of mind, almost emptied out of any thought, 'discovering what it is to *be*' (Shepherd, 2014: 106) ...until my thoughts return to the reality that I need to walk across it. Once again, my feyness is interrupted by rational thought. When speaking of mountaineering, we tend to refer only to the act of ascending, but a trek is only successful when arriving back safely on the ground. As Peskoller says, mountaineering is a method, a way to return safely to the ground (1997: 9). And no matter how often you walk the same paths, you never quite know the mountain, nor your relation to it. 'There is no getting accustomed to [it]' (Shepherd, 2014: 1). The pleasure of the view is short-lived, interrupted by the thought of descending onto the plateau. The plateau is interspersed with deep ravines and caves, and what might seem like walking on solid rock may be walking on a thin layer of ground covering a deep hollow cave underneath. This is a moment literally on edge, the edge between returning to safety, to the hut still visible behind me, or descending into the depths of the Stone Sea.

We descend, my mind jumping between excitement and anxiety, determination and worry, between enjoying the thrill of sliding down snowfields and wondering how thick the blanket of snow actually is. I feel that I am moving in an ever-shifting landscape. Unlike past beliefs that mountains were permanent and solid formations, the ravines, sinkholes, caves and rocks, as well as the melting snow which reveals the weathered world of rock, are reminders that mountains are also 'vulnerable to the attrition of time' (Macfarlane, 2003: 43). Right now, I have no sense of time and location, and with paths hidden under a blanket of snow, I have to trust others' footsteps, stone men and sticks scattered across the plateau. I am treading carefully but finding a pleasant rhythm forging my way into the environment with my movements, breath and the sound of my footsteps. With every step I feel I am becoming more and more part of the landscape (Ingold, 2011).

Curiously, another walker suddenly coming past asks me whether I think we are walking *on* or *in* the Stone Sea, saying she had been contemplating this question along the way. I immediately respond with *in* the Stone Sea. I explain that *on* would suggest that the surface of the earth is separated from aerial media such as wind and precipitation, suddenly becoming aware of myself as wholly suspended into this forever-shifting and tightly woven landscape of earth, rock, air and sky. I think of Tim Ingold's book *Being Alive* (2011) where he states that the ground of solid rock is not a coherent surface that clearly separates earth and sky. Quoting Nan Shepherd, he asserts that life is lived in a zone of intermingling, in a zone where medium and substance mix, and where wind and weather and creatures forge through the environment through movement, making the texture of the land. As such, we live and walk *in* not *on* the land (Ingold, 2011: 119-120). As Nan Shepherd says, 'I don't feel I'm walking *up* a mountain but *into* the mountain' (in Macfarlane, 2012: 24).

We finally arrive safely at the next hut at a height of over 2,000 metres. Feeling my body and mind letting go, I suddenly become aware of just how tense I was. My migraine kicks in and I feel sick. I take my medication and wait two hours for

**Image VII:**
View onto the plateau of the Stone Sea, looking east. June 2016. ©Anita Strasser

the pain to go, admiring the views through the migraine fog, aware of the arrival of more and more mountain tourists through a strange haze and dampened noise. The repeated extension and refurbishment of mountain huts with ever-more lounges and sleeping chambers, constant warm water and shower cabins, and hotel-like breakfast buffets, together with the new online booking system, has raised concerns about mountain tourism. Mountaineering is a growing trend with romantic ideas of a hut atmosphere but without wanting to let go of comfort and high standards, making huts for protection into places of consumption. The constant increase in comfort, prices and visitor numbers, and the need to book your trip far in advance to get a bed/mattress is making it harder for locals to find protection over night when out unplanned. Although huts cannot turn anyone away, the night might have to be spent on a bench in one of the lounges. Where people used to sleep in large rooms full of mattresses and army blankets, people now ask for their private sphere; where people used to choose from a few

basic meals, the variety of dishes on offer almost mirror a restaurant menu; where people used to wash with cold water in unisex wash rooms, these rooms are now mostly empty with walkers queuing up to have a hot shower. Some bring hairdryers, dismayed when they realise there are no sockets to plug them in. Offering phone charging stations is the next big challenge.

I am torn between the good intentions to provide hikers with every comfort possible and the lost atmosphere and function of a mountain hut due to the added luxuries of the contemporary mountain experience. Although unwilling to accept and consume some of the luxuries on offer, I do benefit from some (e.g. smaller rooms, healthier food options) due to my migraine and its consequential nausea and insomnia. I lament the fact that these intermittent conditions should make me unsuitable for mountaineering and one day I might even appreciate the existence of a people carrier, unable to ascend on foot. But the added luxuries are also a question of sustainability,

climate change and water supply. For the huts, melting snow is transported in long hoses from large snow fields on tall mountains a few kilometres away. If the winter does not yield enough snow for a dry summer, water supply needs to be heavily regulated. This is at odds with increased water use through showers and larger numbers of guests. Each innkeeper has highlighted the dependence on precipitation to keep huts running. The last mountain carrier mentioned earlier was the one to discover the snowfield behind one particular hut in the 70s. He was out hunting when he heard the trickling of water. At the time, he felt proud to have found a 'never-ending' source of water for his successors but with climate change and summers getting hotter and drier, he is not so sure there will be never-ending water supply. Despite my body crying out for a hot shower as I feel frozen to the bone from my migraine, I cannot bring myself to use a shower and wash myself with freezing water as I stand alone in the empty washroom.

The next day we wake up to a storm and minimal visibility. The innkeepers are advising us to wait until conditions improve. Some walkers are getting irritated as they want to adhere to their carefully planned route. For them, every minute counts. Each year people perish because they do not listen to expert advice. The plateau is adorned with crosses and shrines for the deceased. One shrine in particular irritates me. It commemorates the death of a German mountaineer who, with two friends in 2007, attempted the crossing of the plateau in a heavy snowstorm against the plea of the innkeeper. The messages of heroism left by friends and family seem to be in contradiction of what happened. As Macfarlane says, it's easy to glorify the climbing dead but what is often forgotten is that people who regularly take big risks must be either completely selfish or 'incapable of sympathy for their loved ones' (Macfarlane, 2003, p.98). This occurrence shook the town and remains in local people's consciousness. This was not a case of *BergDenken* – transcending rationality to feed the addiction of dazzling views. It was a case of sticking to an itinerary and getting to the hut booked for the night. One may not understand the compulsion to stand atop



**Image VIII:**
The water hose transporting melted snow to the hut (centre right), waiting to be installed for the season, June 2016.
©Anita Strasser.

the highest mountains, but the compulsion to continue with minimal visibility, serious life danger staring one in the face and against expert advice is even less understandable. Had they listened to the innkeeper, this tragedy could have been avoided and the mountain doctor and rescue team would not have had to risk their own lives, ascending in those dangerous conditions to keep the dead man's colleagues alive.

It must be noted here that mountain rescue in Austria is a voluntary organisation, relying on members doing this work in their own time without payment. The mountain rescue team cite lack of preparation, underestimation of terrain and weather and overestimation of one's abilities, all of which frequently lead to getting lost, as the most common reasons for emergency calls. Once unable to continue, the greatest danger is freezing to death. Unable to access taken-for-granted equipment, the mountain doctor works with the most basic of treatments. One such "treatment" is tea. No matter what the issue, he never goes out without a flask of hot tea as it not only helps calm the nerves of a stricken mountaineer but can also

save someone from hypothermia. When faced with injuries or heart attacks, the decision to treat the patient in the mountains or risk the precarious transport to the hospital (weather and transport permitting) is crucial, requiring expertise and on-the-spot-thinking from the doctor. With mountain tourism the new leisure trend, and the Stone Sea and its perceived lack of danger being the testing ground for the oft inexperienced, the number of emergency calls is on the increase.

The storm does not last long and visibility returns. Now the sun is shining but further precipitation and thunder is predicted for later in the afternoon. We head off to trace the routes of the shepherds that have been walked for centuries. Due to Salzburg once belonging to Bavaria with cross-border agreements, some local land is still under Bavarian control and some Bavarian land contains sheep-grazing rights for local farmers. When country borders were established in the mid 18th century, former cross-border sheepherding traditions were taken into account. The document sheep farmers showed me states the exact number of sheep certain farmhouses can allow in

**Image IX:**
The shrine commemorating the German mountaineer. September 2017.
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certain areas for grazing purposes. It is the oldest state agreement that is still valid today and makes landownership, borders and subsidies for farmers hugely complex. The route of one group of sheep farmers may start on land that is geographically in Austria but under Bavarian control and finish on land that is in Austria and under Austrian control but whose paths and huts are managed by the German Alpine Association. For some the route ends on land in Bavaria under Bavarian control but with grazing rights for Austrian sheep farmers. The calculation of grazing areas and subsidies for farmers is far from straightforward, with EU regulations complicating things further by paying monies only for either Austrian or Bavarian land,

We arrive at one of the shepherds' huts, a hut on Bavarian land but rebuilt and used by Austrian sheep farmers. Despite being locked up, it feels comforting to be near a hut, it provides the feeling of safety and shelter. I contemplate my experience of sheepherding over the past years, an annual occurrence in autumn, where farmers walk across the Stone Sea to collect their sheep to bring them back down before the cold winter arrives. It is an event where the importance of the relationship between humans and animals and their knowledge of the mountains comes to the fore. We walk with the same group of people every year, who through carefully co-ordinated teamwork, where one has to rely on the knowledge and skills of the other, have



**Image X:**
Austrian shepherds' hut on Bavarian land, 100m from the (invisible) Austrian border. June 2016.
©Anita Strasser

not both, ignoring the fact that sheep are border crossers. Crossing over to Bavarian ground, it is strange to think that we are now walking in a different country; there's nothing to indicate this except a little stone that marks the border.

become trusted friends. We go in pairs or groups, with the elderly and weaker walking the shorter distances or keeping a look-out. This includes me as I could never keep up with the young and fit who circumnavigate the plateau to look for sheep. But I

am not made to feel inadequate – on the contrary, people are needed in various locations to monitor progress. Once all sheep are herded together, the farmer sounds a cry; the sheep recognise his voice and follow him. We too follow, surrounding the herd, keeping an eye on potential runaways and dawdlers.

As I contemplate in front of the hut, I nervously gnaw on my sandwich and I am getting restless. I tend not to rest and eat much when out walking unless I am within a certain distance, or time rather, of a hut, particularly in unstable weather conditions. By now, the atmosphere has become quite threatening, there is the constant rumbling of thunder and it is only a matter of time before a thunderstorm hits. I feel uneasy and my chest becomes as closed and heavy as the atmosphere in the air. I feel vulnerable. We leave. About 40 minutes from the next hut we walk right into a thunder and hailstorm. Much to my surprise, I do not panic. When the storm hits right above us, I throw my metal walking sticks away from us,

into every nook and cranny of my body, despite my waterproof gear. After the worst of it, we begin the final stretch to the hut in the pouring rain. Soaked through and through, we arrive at the hut. I realise that the experience has affected me more than I had thought. With shaking hands and mouth and shivering all over, I drink my flask of hot tea which I always carry with me, feeling only calmer after I have downed it all. I change clothes and warm up by leaning against the hot tiled stove. I chat to the innkeeper who says that he tends to go out in this weather to find sources of water; locations where water runs together and where he might build a funnel to transport it to the hut. He had previously told me how to behave when caught in a storm, instructions I had followed to the letter earlier. He says he is not as excited about the gastronomy aspect of running a hut than he is about everything to do with the outdoors. Even after 26 years he loves the view from the hut like on the first day, but his experience goes back much further. The position of innkeeper runs in his family and is fundamental



**Image XI & XII:**
Sheep farmers on their way back into the valley. September 2017.
©Anita Strasser

crouch down, and lean against a rock. Once the hope of getting to the hut dry has vanished, I even begin to appreciate the experience of being totally exposed to the elements, of being *weathered*, as Tim Ingold (2011) would call it. The close sound of thunder reverberates around my body, the wind batters against my face, the hail stones are hitting me on the back and the rainwater is making its way

to his character (Sennett, 1998).

He remembers the days of the past, when local events such as skiing races and evenings with locals who sang and made music were more frequent than now. He claims that with the advent of leisure time and hobbies people have become more stressed than ever before. Where in the past

local trekkers would devote a whole day to coming to and being on the plateau, taking their time to engage with other trekkers or staff and have coffee with him, today many come up solely for the purpose of exercise, returning to the valley shortly afterwards as they have arranged other activities. This never-ending offer of past-time activities has greatly impacted hut life with fewer social interactions and increased anonymity, he says. With 90% of overnight guests one-off mountain tourists from other areas, the local homely and

of the Stone Sea.

The most memorable night is the night before the famous pilgrimage across the Stone Sea, where the hut is so full with local and non-local people that some are forced to 'sleep' on the stairs sitting up. It is the only night without the usual lights-out at 10pm, with music and dance until the morning. The pilgrimage started in the 17th century to remember the first day nobody had died of the plague. Today, in good weather conditions, around 2,000 pilgrims



**Image XIII:**
One of the mountain huts on the south side of the Stone Sea, June 2016.
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familiar atmosphere has been replaced with a more transactional one of mountain consumption. He longs for the nights of idle chatter, singing mountain songs and drinking schnapps with friends, and cannot understand the contemporary mode of quick transactions, anonymity and lack of engagement. Some traditional social gatherings with local people, music and dance remain, though, such as the nights with sheep farmers before they collect their flocks, end-of-course celebrations with the mountain rescue team which trains there and the annual summer solstice fires, where members of various associations burn fires along the ridges

begin the ascent at 2am and climb to the plateau in the darkness (with headlamps) to meet those that have spent the night there. After a religious service, the human chain walks across the Stone Sea down to Kings Lake in Bavaria, intercepted by some stops. For tradition's sake, the border police await the pilgrims at the country border. Due to the terrain, praying is done individually. The whole trek takes between 9-15 hours, depending on fitness. Despite the chaos in the hut, it is the innkeeper's favourite night.

In 2017, me and my husband decided to join the pilgrimage from the hut until the border crossing.

I was curious. The thought of walking amongst 2,500 people had never appealed to me. I am more of a silent walker who seeks time away from human company (except for my husband's), not least because of the constant breathless chatter that interferes with a more sensory and inward experience of the mountains. As Nan Shepherd says, going into the hills with chatterers leaves one wary and dispirited, because one cannot hear the mountain speak (Shepherd, 2014: 14). We join the end of the chain and find that not many people are actually talking. After a while I find myself walking in silence and at a pleasant pace, almost unaware of hundreds of people around me, aware only of my body movements and the

*Wanderlust*, 'a state in which the mind, the body and the world are in conversation with each other' (2001: 5). 'Walking', she continues, 'leaves us free to think without being wholly lost in our thoughts'. Through the rhythm of walking and the rhythmic sounds of this human chain, I almost reach a state of meditation, feeling pleasantly alone in this huge group of people, conversing only with my mind, body and the landscape.

**By way of conclusion**

When the group congregates again three hours later on the country border, interrupting my silent conversation, I am suddenly irritated by this mass of people and the loud noise of chatter. Me and



**Image XIV:**
The human chain of the Stone Sea pilgrimage, August 2017.
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rhythmic sounds of footsteps and walking sticks clunking against the rock. The co-ordination of vision and body movement is now in perfect unison, decisions of where to step next made in split seconds. 'One sees where one is and where one is going at the same time' (Shepherd, 2014: 13). This time it is as Rebecca Solnit says in her book

my husband turn back, walking the whole path in solitude and silence, where only moments before thousands of footsteps had hit the surface. Walking with the right kind of companion, whose whole sense of being is as merged with the mountain as one's own, enhances rather than distracts from silence (Shepherd, 2014: 14). It is as if I had only dreamt the pilgrimage, as if the noise

and the presence of people were only a fragment of a fading dream. I slow down and the tranquillity of the empty and silent landscape I am walking into infiltrates my whole sense of being, making me feel calm and at peace, feeling once more the unison between my mind, body and the landscape.

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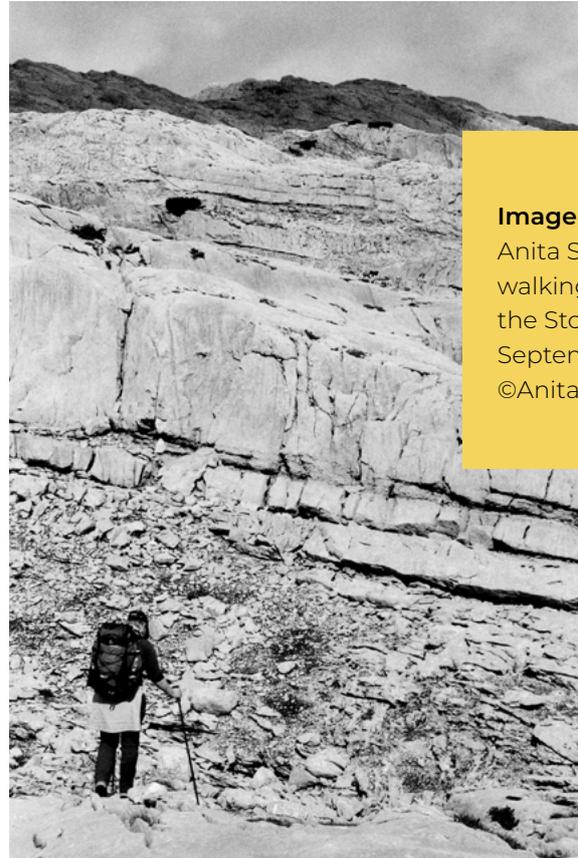


**Image XV:**
Anita Strasser walking into the Stone Sea, September 2018.
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# Walking In Valverde

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walking, Valverde, landscape, feet, road

## Abstract

Walking Places, walking in places. Walking requires a place where it can occur, where one can put one foot in front of the other and move the body forward, through space, in a particular landscape. Walking cannot happen without place, where motion engages the senses: feet feel the soil while touching the ground, eyes see the space that surrounds the body, ears hear the soundscapes, the nose smells the odours released into the atmosphere – taken together these sensory experiences can be referred to as landscape (or sense-scape). But walking can also generate physical landscapes, or, as Careri defines, walkscapes (2013), when it is the main agent - the genesis of a landscape, with the human step making way through space, printing a trail that will become a road, firstly in soil, formed by footsteps, then cobbled and asphalted. In Lisbon, the old Caminho de Valverde (a road that connected Rossio in the city centre to São Sebastião da Pedreira up north, through Portas de Santo Antão, São José, Santa Marta e São Sebastião da Pedreira) is one such example. Located at the foot of Santana Hill, and running parallel to Valverde stream, it was once the most natural and comfortable place to walk up to the northern territories. Over the years, the road was shaped, as buildings were constructed along it, defining the current irregular and dense urban image. This paper will describe how the landscape of this road has developed from a walking perspective and in light of contemporary landscape conventions. It also aims to emphasise the role that modes of travel play in shaping one's understanding of a place. A landscape that was built to walk can hardly be understood in the same way when travelled at a faster velocity.

## Introduction

This paper will focus on the connection between walking and landscape and it will be divided in two major parts: the first will focus on questions concerning walking and landscape, or how a person understands landscape while walking; the second, considering the concepts and aspects mentioned previously, will describe the landscape evolution of a particular road in Lisbon – *Caminho de Valverde* - through a walking perspective and in light of contemporary landscape conventions and theories. This description will consider the period until the earthquake of 1755[1]. It also aims to emphasise the importance that modes of travel have in understanding a place, as a landscape that was built to walk will hardly be understood in a similar way when travelled at a superior velocity.

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1 The 1755 earthquake transformed landscape irreversibly. It was one of the biggest changes of Lisbon that happened without human action.

Talking about the concept of "Landscape" requires a wide and global research of all the theories, schools of thought and thematic areas that study it - architecture, landscape design, arts, geography, sociology, biology, or even politics - as clearly every single area of knowledge has something to add to it. In this paper, the concept is understood through a walking perspective - how can a landscape be understood and built through human steps, or, using Francesco Careri's definition, how can a walkscape (2013) be understood and built through human steps?

**Landscape and Walking**

Walking requires a place where human movement through space can happen, where people can put one foot in front of the other and move their bodies forward, across a space, in a landscape. Walking cannot take place outside a landscape, be it in a street, a mountain, the beach, or a private space (such as our own room). While walking, human senses understand the world around them, feet touch the ground and feel the pavement, eyes see while focusing and reading the space that surrounds the body, ears listen and build soundscapes[2], the nose smells the odours that live in that same space and, when possible, the mouth tastes the flavours that the hands bring to it and that are available nearby. In this way, landscape is read, understood and built through senses and reinterpreted by the brain, that has an archive of previous saved memories, similar experiences lived before, or lived by other people who experienced and shared it with others. As such, the feelings and understanding of the landscapes we travel, that we think are our own, were in fact inherited from society.

In Augustin Berque's words:

> 'The landscape is not in the gaze on the object: it is in the reality of things; in other words, in the relationship we have with our environment. (2013: 30)

Tim Ingold also mentions that

> 'To feel the air and walk on the ground is not to make external, tactile contact with our surroundings but to mingle with them. In this mingling, as we live and breathe, the wind, light and moisture of the sky bind with the substances of the earth in the continual forging of a way through the tangle of lifelines that comprise the land.' (2011: 115)

Landscape is also understood through cultural rules we learn through time, which are taught by the society we belong to. These rules allow us to live in a way socially accepted by the community and to survive in the landscape where we live and move, as well as build, changing it according to our needs. These same rules define the way we should and can behave in the territory, and, therefore, how we can walk.

> 'One only sees what is proper to see in the world to which one belongs.' (Berque, 2013: 17)

> 'Landscapes are the product on the one hand of abstraction, on the other of emotive projection(...) the interpretation of sense impressions that generates them is (...) based on what the individual learns in and from the long social evolutionary process of normative acculturation.' (Kühne, 2019: 17)

Walking is also the best way to apprehend a landscape, since human senses, as Jan Gehl states, are only truly used at walking pace - which

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2 A soundscape, a term introduced by R. Murray Schaffer, can be described as a landscape defined and understood by the combination of sounds it provides. As the author mentions, "it is any acoustic field of study. We may speak of a musical composition as a soundscape, or a radio program as a soundscape or an acoustic environment as a soundscape." (1994: 7).

has been defined as 5km/h. Higher speeds, of motor vehicles, trains, planes, cars, make it hard to comprehend the space around, alienating the senses which feel confused with the stimuli that pass very quickly and are hardly understood by the brain that needs to adjust to an overlap of smells, images, sounds, which juxtapose one over the other. While at high speeds, seated inside a vehicle that conducts the human body through space, touch isn't used at all, only the contact of the material that covers the seat is felt, or the way the tyres touch the pavement, or the train the rails, or the plane areas of turbulence and air shafts, or nothing at all, as the senses feel confused with the way high speeds mix sensorial impressions, without time to focus and save images and apprehend smells and sounds, without time to understand what they are feeling. While walking, a person understands space according to their own rhythm.

**Walking as path builder**

But walking can also build a landscape, it can be the main generator of its shape, or it can be responsible for its genesis, with the human step making way through space, setting a trail that will become a road, first in soil, then paved with stone or asphalt. It seems we have forgotten how our bodies are also direct agents in space change, leaving footsteps printed in the territory and leaving our footprints directly in the soil.

> 'Paths are the habits of a landscape. They are acts of consensual making. It's hard to create a footpath on your own (...) Paths connect. This is their first duty and their chief reason for being, they relate places in a literal sense, and by extension they relate people.' (Macfarlane, 2012: 17)

In older cities, which were built over centuries by successive waves of expansion, there are several examples of roads located in the more intuitive and accessible areas chosen by people and animals which were shaped by feet and paws, marking grooves through vegetation, that would be sedimented and enlarged as years, decades and centuries passed. The trails would then become main roads, where the expansion of cities from the city centre to rural areas would take place as buildings would be constructed along its route.

> 'Through walking, in short, landscapes are woven into life, and lives are woven into the landscape, in a process that is continuous and never-ending.' (Ingold, 2011: 47)

In Lisbon, as in so many other cities, there are many examples of these kinds of roads that can be described as feet-built roads. *Caminho de Valverde* is one such example, as it starts in the historical city centre – *Rossio* Square – and heads north to *São Sebastião da Pedreira* area.

Centuries of actions by people, nature and animals have shaped this landscape to become the way it is known today. Therefore, to study the evolution of a landscape, it is required to have knowledge of the major events that contributed to its change, and that allow us to analyse and understand it through the light of contemporaneity.

A landscape 'records stories of continuous human settlement over thousands of years', as Anne Whiston Spirn (1998: 34) states, and *Caminho de Valverde* is one such example of the action of both humans and nature.

**Image I:**
Lisbon Map Locating Roman Main Archaelogical Traces (Moita, 1994)

## The landscape of *Caminho de Valverde*

To think of a description of a possible history of walking for this road, and the way people were understanding landscape, there has to be imagined a virgin area, with no human change and activity, natural, where a stream runs in a valley between hills to the river *Tejo – Valverde* stream.

This is the easiest area to walk, and it can be assumed that walking here would take place in the middle of nature, the human step leaving footprints and starting a trail, building a path that would be used by other humans and animals. There are no documents that can prove it, but recent references indicate that this was a very fertile soil, as it was near the water stream, which would afterwards be used as farmland. The feet

would compact the soil of the riverside, opening a path through vegetation, the ears would capture that sound – the sound of feet treading the soil, and of water running towards the big *Tejo* estuary. Senses would then be more alert, in order to control imminent dangers. A person would move in the middle of a natural landscape, learning how to control it, with their sight, hearing and touch – mainly the contact between feet and soil – deciding the way, controlling the movement. Naturally, this is a description that is taking into account the way contemporary humans use their senses. It is known today that landscape contemplation only appeared in Europe during the Renaissance, and that vision wasn't the



**Image II:**
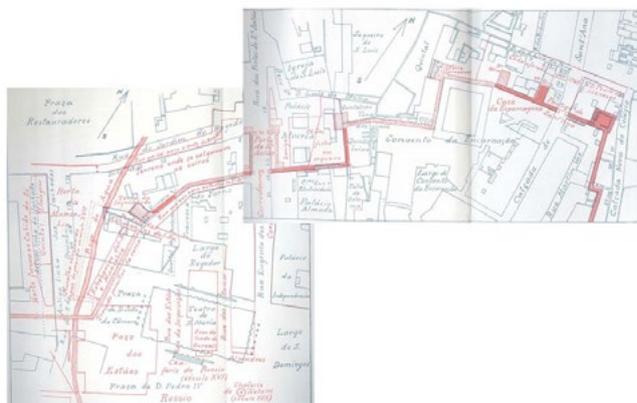Contemporary Lisbon Basemap Locating The Ferdinand Wall (Lisbon City Council, 2019)

main sense in the sensorial apprehension of the pre-modern world as it is now. Juhani Pallasmaa (2016) mentions that the ear began to be the main sense for humans, as it was essential for their survival – and it mustn't be forgotten that before seeing a dangerous animal, one hears it.

**Image III:**
The Ferdinand Wall
(Vieira da Silva, 1987)

A big change in the landscape happened in 1385, with the construction of the *Fernandina* city wall. The picture shows the definition of the wall using contemporary cartography. The road is cut in two parts and a *Santo Antão* Door – that would of the major food supply access centre during the Middle Ages centuries. In terms of landscape, a strict limit of what is a rural area outside the wall and a dense urban area inside the wall was defined. The road is cut with the introduction of a big and authoritative wall tower, a closed squared polygon that allows access to the city centre and to a paved, built and urban area. Outside the wall, the rural area dominates the senses, as the road is flanked by fertile kitchen gardens and farmland to the riverside, as José-Augusto França (2008) describes.

The definition of the wall also defines the area where the city ended and the farms began, the same farms that would supply the city with fresh fruit, vegetables and meat. The road was already travelled by wagons and animals that would access the city centre, either for food provision, or for other matters. Walking here is apprehending all sorts of sensations – the entrance in the walled city, for those who come from the countryside (or the exit, if someone is leaving it) and a huge confusion of urban sounds that mix as long as man walks towards the city wall. Outside, a countryside existence prevails.

The territory was defining itself, transforming according to human needs, adapting to basic functions. During the Roman Period, as Sérgio Proença (2014) notes in his PHD thesis (and due to archaeological works in *Praça da Figueira*), this would be a very important road, having a width of 6.5m and connecting the city of Lisbon – the roman *Olisipo* – and northern territories. Irisalva Moita (1994) adds that this road would go just as far as *Andaluz* area, where it would meet some constructions. The importance of the road would then be identified and would allow a new understanding of the landscape surrounding it, as it was connected with a territory used and changed by people, through the imposition of infrastructure. Unfortunately there are no other references or archaeological works that can shed light on what the *Caminho de Valverde* landscape was like during the Roman period (for instance, if it had parallel construction in its margins). From the little evidence available, it can be imagined that people would walk mainly a rural landscape, containing some far-between buildings, and that this movement through space should be interrupted by the sound of the wheels of wagons in the well-defined pavement and probably of the horses and other animals.

As the city developed and the population grew, particularly after the 16th century, with the Discoveries and the Golden Portuguese era, it expanded to territories outside the defence walls. Here, near the *Caminho de Valverde*, the nobles and Church found the perfect place to build their palaces and convents, mainly due to its salubrity,
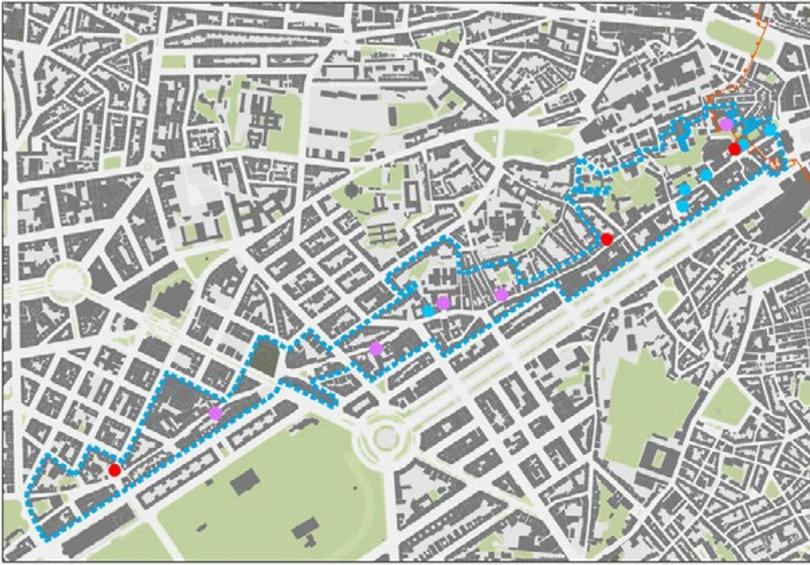
**Image IV:**
Contemporary Lisbon Basemap Locating Churches (in orange), Convents and Monasteries (in purple) and Palaces (in blue) (Lisbon City Council, 2019)

but also because of the wide plots still available to build. José-Augusto França (2008) and Irisalva Moita (1994) claim that the area was still very rural, with orchards, vineyards, vegetable gardens and olive groves, which is supported by Damião de Góis' texts of the 16th century.

Between the building of the city wall and the 18th century, some of the most prominent palaces and convents were built here, many of which couldn't escape the earthquake of 1755. Image IV shows the location of these buildings, as well as of churches and convents/monasteries. It is also known for sure that the area was so pleasant that Lisbon's inhabitants used to enjoy walking around the green fields of the valley. This proves that this was a very enjoyable place and, particularly, that this is the time when people started to look around and enjoy landscape in all its diversity. As Augustin Berque (2013) states, the landscape concept appeared during the Renaissance at the same time as perspective was created. So people started walking, not only because they needed to go somewhere, but also because it was a pleasurable thing to do and the best way to enjoy the landscape, as both natural and urban landscapes pleased them - particularly here, where so many magnificent and noble buildings were erected. According to Jan Gehl, it shouldn't be overlooked how architectural details of palaces and convents are visually very interesting and captivate the sight, so one enjoys walking in diversified roads. In all its diversity, walking here should be interesting and stimulating. What can be imagined here is a landscape where wide buildings – palaces and convents – with big gardens delimited by walls were built parallel to the road and defining its limits. At the same time, a residential quarter was being planned and built in *Santana* hill.

In 1567 a new parish was created – *São José de Entre as Hortas*, and another one – *São Sebastião da Pedreira* up north, in 1652. Both prove the growth of population in two specific centuries.



**Image V:**
Contemporary Lisbon Basemap Locating São Sebastião da Pedreira's Church (on the left) and São José de Entre as Hortas (Lisbon City Council, 2019)

With the urban expansion happening outside the city wall, its presence was no longer visible as some houses used it as a building wall.

Walking here starts to be quite different from what it was in previous centuries. Leaving the tower wall, one doesn't feel that they have left the city, as the houses follow the road before *Andaluz* area, where the landscape becomes more rural again, and then returns near *São Sebastião da Pedreira*. Senses apprehend all sorts of sensorial stimuli – the eyes get lost in the architectural splendour of palaces and convents, ears in the sounds of carriages and the everyday life of the road, and the nose smells some rural scents – from fruit trees, gardens, and vineyards.

In 1755 the landscape changed irreversibly. An earthquake destroys part of the built heritage, leaving the road unrecognizable – *Santo Antão* Door fell, as well as some of the most important and monumental palaces. As a curiosity, José-Augusto França (2008) says that the backyards of *Rossio*, farmland that used to be leisure places to walk and rest, functioned as camping space after the tragedy as it presented sufficient empty space for the homeless population.

In the middle of the ruins, how could and would someone walk? With which spirit? Between dust and litter what information would senses get of the world around? What would they feel while walking this space? The fatality of knowing that the world they used to know radically changed in a couple of minutes and that the familiar landscape was replaced by another, born of the ruins of a past that isn't coming back.

There is no cartography or illustration of *Caminho de Valverde* showing the period after the catastrophe. There is only a cartographic map of
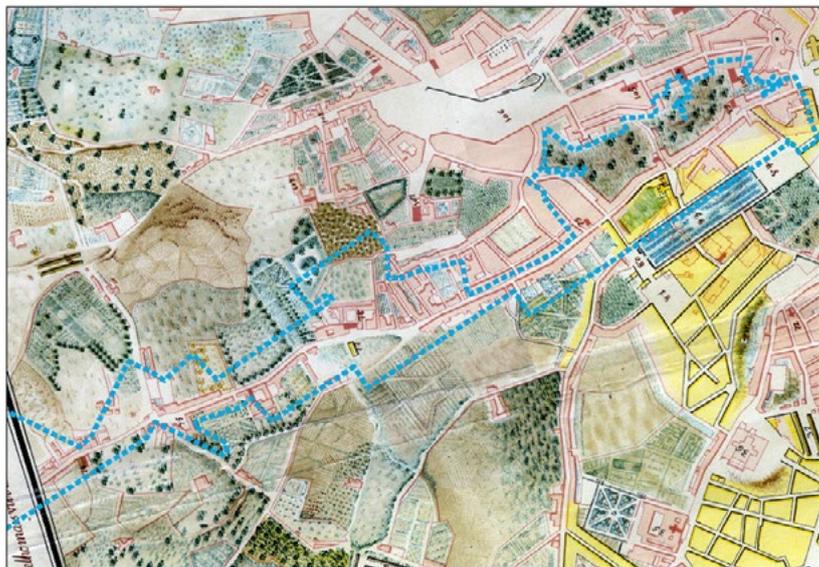


**Image VI:**
Cartographic Map (1780) Showing the Area 5 years Later (Lisbon City Council, [1780] 2019)

1780 (Image VI), where the rebuilding of the road was already taking place, with the front facades starting to become stabilized. The map is also illustrative of how the area was still very rural, stating that the valley was still farmland.

**Conclusion**

Walking only happens in a landscape, or a walkscape. While walking, we become part of this landscape – we don't just walk through it, we connect and act with it, leaving our mark as we walk along. Senses are what allows us to understand the space around us, as the brain receives data from eyes, ears, skin, mouth, nose. Using its own archive of lived and told memories, the brain decodes what is sensed and transforms it into data that makes us walk and know the landscape where we are moving.

Cultural and social rules are also an integral part of the sensing process, as they allow people to understand and connect with a landscape in a specific way.

Walking is the best way to get this data, as the defined average 5km/h velocity of human speed is the best way for senses to learn and read what surrounds the body.

People can build a landscape while walking, with their feet opening a path. A landscape is an archive of a continuous change of landscape and can also tell the story of communities and cities. The study of these changes, and particularly in what walking is concerned, allows the understanding of the way people walked and connected with a place.

'I have long been fascinated by how people understand themselves using landscape, by the topographies of self we carry within us and by the maps we make to navigate these interior terrains.' (Marcfarlane, 2012: 26)

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# Flâneuse Fragments: Towards a critical and situated feminist approach to walking in the city

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**tags**

flâneuse, flâneuserie, walking, cities, gender, race, urban

## Abstract

This paper sets out an alternative agenda for thinking and writing about walking in the city from a situated and feminist perspective. Taking a different departure point from traditions of writing about walking in the city that celebrate the figure of the flâneur, this intervention proposes a mode of flâneuserie that can be used as a critical feminist practice to interpret and disrupt urban space. The paper draws on a set of *flâneuse fragments* – ideas borrowed from a range of women activists, academics and artists – who use walking in their research and practice. The paper firstly outlines feminist discussions about the possibility of the flâneuse, drawing on other readings of the early modern city. I then lay out a series of propositions for a situated and critical flâneuserie using examples of feminist approaches ranging from the UK-based sociologist Nirmal Puwar to the Blank Noise collective in India. The paper proposes a mode of flâneuserie that a) is attuned to how different forms of power unfold in and through public space b) uses attunement to power as the basis for interventions that challenge the status quo c) uses walking to read the past, present and futures of spaces, against the grain d) recognises that experiences of walking are situated and embodied rather than universal e) is multiple and based on a collective effort f) provides insights into the urban without claiming to be complete or universal.

## Introduction

Classical theories of the urban experience from the late nineteenth and early/mid twentieth century that have become 'the canon' are largely based on the experiences of men. For example, while the accounts of Simmel and his idea of the urban blasé (1903) or Goffman's idea of civil inattention (1963), which capture how those moving through the city are politely disinterested in their fellow passers-by, may seem readily applicable to anyone travelling on the London tube at rush hour, they start to breakdown when we think about incidents of sexual harassment on public transport. Who is afforded anonymity and invisibility in the city as they move through it? How do different experiences of walking in the city provide a lens on how power works through urban space? These questions should be key to thinking about accounts of walking in the city.

The argument this paper proposes is that firstly, the dominant account of walking in the city in urban studies presupposes a white able-bodied man, as exemplified in the figure of the flâneur – this is not a new or original argument but is worth restating. Secondly, I set out six propositions for a critical and situated flâneuserie, as opposed to flânerie. My contention is that while the flâneur has acted as an inspiration for a tradition of walking that takes for granted a set of privileges based on gender, race and able-bodiedness, feminist walking practices can offer valuable insights into how power works through urban space, challenge and disrupt taken for granted assumptions about the body of the

walker, and offer alternate readings of the city. The paper draws on a set of *flâneuse fragments* – ideas borrowed from a range of women activists, academics and artists – who use walking in their research and practice in order to advance a critical and situated feminist approach to walking in the city.

## Finding the Flâneuse

The flâneur is a surprisingly resilient urban archetype arising from nineteenth-century Paris. The flâneur is an idler and voyeur celebrated in the writings of Baudelaire (1969) and others. He is a wry and detached observer of urban life who moves through the city with ease. Most notably Walter Benjamin (1999) further develops the idea of the flâneur in his unfinished/unfinishable magnus opus, *The Arcades Project*, an inventory of the Paris of the nineteenth century that provides a fractured lens on the city of modernity. The flâneur moves through the streets of Paris, in Benjamin's words 'botanising on the asphalt' (Benjamin (1999: 36). That is to say, just as the naturalist reads and classifies the natural world, so the flâneur reads and classifies the city. The book is arranged in thematic sections and does not lend itself to being read from front to back cover. Rather the reader is invited to get lost and read through the text, in the same way that the flâneur understands the city through its fragments.

The flâneur in these classical accounts is most definitely a man: after all in the Paris of the nineteenth century or in the city of the early twentieth century only certain bodies had the privilege to, in Baudelaire's words: 'be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world' (1969: 4). And he is most definitely white. However, the

particular raced and gendered experience that the figure of flâneur embodies and the difficulties for other people to take on that role has not gone unnoticed or unchallenged.

Janet Wolff (1985) argues that the flâneur describes the experiences of 'the men of modernity'. Women are present in these accounts but only as the object of the flâneur's gaze, they cannot be the flâneur. She argues 'There can be no possibility of the flâneuse: the essential point is that such a character was rendered impossible by the sexual divisions of the nineteenth century.' (1985: 45).

But does this necessarily mean that there cannot be a flâneuse? Elizabeth Wilson (1991) engages with women's accounts of walking in the city of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in order to argue against Wolff, stressing that urban space was and is more shifting and contradictory. She argues that it presented dangers but also opportunities for women, drawing on historical sources to argue that working-class women working in the city were paid more than in rural areas. Wilson excavates the histories of middle-class artistic women who walked in the city, for example, George Sands, while also highlighting that the accounts of middle-class men are *full* of working-class women in public. They were there but did not occupy space on the same terms as men. Furthermore, Wilson argues that the urban had impacts on masculinity as well as femininity, painting a picture of the insecure and impotent flâneur – and let's not forget *The Arcades Project* is looking back at the flâneur as a figure at risk of extinction due to the tumultuous character of modernity. Wilson's account thus makes central the experiences of women in the cities of modernity and destabilises the figure of the flâneur.

The restrictions experienced by black women in particular in the early twentieth century in urban space are explored by Hazel Carby (1992). Carby

focuses on moral panics about the presence of black women in cities that emerged during the period of mass migration of black people from the American south to the northern cities, highlighting the policing of black women's bodies by both white and black middle-class intellectuals and arbiters of morality. She outlines how the possibility of black women's presence in the streets became coded as a threat to the moral order:

> 'If a black woman can claim her freedom and migrate to an urban environment, *what is to keep her from negotiating her own path through its streets*? What are the consequences of the female self-determination evident in such a journey for the establishment of a socially acceptable moral order that defines the boundaries of respectable sexual relations?' (1992: 746, emphasis added)

Carby uses biography to illustrate how black women at this time challenged these gendered and racialised norms, for example, pointing to the urban blues women whose mobile lives and forms of self-expression in their music flew in the face of received ideas of respectability.

The tension between the stark policing of North American cities along gendered, classed and raced lines and the desire to lose oneself in the city is captured in the novellas of Nella Larsen. Larsen's protagonists are always on the move – from the South to the North, across oceans to Europe and back again, and also within the city. There is a passage in *Quicksand* where Larsen's protagonist, Helga, who like the author is a black mixed-race woman, finds freedom on the streets of Chicago:

> '[A]s she stepped out into the moving multi-colored crowd, there came to her a queer feeling of enthusiasm, as if she were tasting some agreeable exotic food, sweetbreads – smothered with truffles and mushrooms –

> perhaps. And, oddly enough, she felt, too, that she had come home.' (2014 [1928]: 30)

Here, for a moment, Helga who never feels like she quite belongs anywhere, can revel in being part of the crowd.

So far, my critique of the way the figure of the flâneur has become the archetypal walker has drawn on other readings of the early modern city based on the biographies and writings of women to highlight the raced and gendered privileges that underscore accounts of walking in the city that have become the canon. They reveal that experiences of walking are situated and embodied rather than universal and that constrictions on walking offer insights into how power works through urban landscapes.

While Benjamin wrote about the flâneur as almost an endangered species, he has proved to be a durable figure in influencing writing on walking. There is still no shortage of contemporary books and articles in the genre of psychogeography by lone male white walkers exploring the city's edges and ruins. In London, this mode of writing is very dominant in writing on the city and is epitomized in the work of Iain Sinclair (2002; 2003; 2015) and Will Self (2007). The kind of arguments found in the dialogue between Wolff and Wilson continue to have purchase on contemporary debates about walking in the city.

Wilson's arguments have more recently been advanced by Lauren Elkin (2016), who argues that 'To suggest that there couldn't be a female version of the flâneur is to limit the ways women have interacted with the city to the ways men have interacted with the city.' (2016: 11). Like Wilson, Elkin carves out an alternative history of flâneuserie based on literary figures such as Jean Rhys and Virginia Woolf, but also drawing from her own experiences as a contemporary flâneuse.

It is a highly readable and enjoyable book that has taken debates about walking, gender and the city to a new audience – and the introduction brilliantly skewers the psychogeography genre – but has its limitations in that it doesn't fully attend to differences of class and race among women. Elsewhere, the geographers Mott and Roberts (2014) have critiqued new writing on urban exploration, its masculism and its ignoring of how gender is embodied in the figure of the urban explorer. They argue that extreme forms of urban exploration require and celebrate a particular kind of body – pithily noting, 'not everyone has (the) balls' (2014) for this kind of research.

How then, might we carve out an alternative form of flâneuserie that is attentive to the situated and embodied experiences of the walker? How might reading against the grain of the city of modernity be something we can extend into the present through our walking practices? And how might this be a tool for critical urban enquiry? In the next section I explore the work of various contemporary walkers in order to put forward six propositions for flâneuserie as a critical urban method.

**Propositions for a multiple, critical and situated approach to walking in the city**

My first proposition is for a flâneuserie that *uses walking to read the past, present and futures of spaces, against the grain*. Here I am taking inspiration from my colleague from Goldsmiths Sociology, the Coventry-based flâneuse Nirmal Puwar. She is perhaps best known for her book *Space Invaders* (2004) but here I'm drawing on a paper called *The Architexture of parliament: Flâneur as a method in Westminster* (2010) where Puwar uses walking through parliament and archival research to read this highly masculine space against the grain and to uncover a

submerged history of women's activism. Puwar explores how hierarchies are written into the fabric of buildings and sustained – and subverted – by the performance of those who participate in these spaces. Through writing the history of the suffragette movement into the spaces of parliament, she argues:

> 'Inhabitation of space enables bodies to move in planned and co-ordinated ways but also in unpredictable ways. Boundaries etched in architectures of stone and iron grids do not go unchallenged. Even the cosiest and most constrained of public men's dwellings can be shaken. Unheard political bodies can take root in the most coveted of polite society's digs.' (2010: 299)

We find another flâneuse reading monumental buildings against the grain in Agnès Varda, the French director who made films from 1955 until her death in 2019. This is a recurring theme in her work, but here I am focussed on the short film *The So-called Caryatids* (Les Dites Cariatides) (1984). The short film, made for French television, combines the poetry of Baudelaire with her own reflections. It is a Walter Benjaminesque inventory/meditation with a feminist twist; as the camera moves around the city Varda muses on the apparent ease with which the female statues support buildings on their heads, as opposed to the grimacing male Atlases who flaunt their labour for all to see.

The writer Eloise Ross reflects on Varda's use of these feminine sculptures, arguing: 'Varda makes it clear that the caryatids are part of an historical pattern that erases women's contributions to society, and their humanity.' (2019, no page number). This playful visual reinterpretation asks the viewer to look again as they move through the city.

My second and third propositions are for a

flâneuserie that is *attuned to how different forms of power unfold in and through public space* and to how *experiences of walking are situated and embodied rather than universal*. I have already argued that alternative readings of the city of modernity, that centre the experience of women, highlight the forms of class, race and gender privilege that the flâneur embodies. Further contemporary inspiration comes from Carole Wright, who in her piece 'Walking whilst being Blak Outside' (2020) takes us on a journey through the gentrifying landscape of South London in lockdown. Carole Wright's walk makes visible processes of the classed reordering of London, while also reflecting on the tension on the practice of walking and the threat of racial hostility. She points to the displacement of the working-class people through estate redevelopment, outcrops of luxury flats, and the developers' promises written on advertising hoardings. Sitting at the top of the hill in Burgess Park, Wright is joined by voices:

'It's the spirit of my ancestors, grandparents Wilhelmina and Eric Wright, my Jamaican lineage. They lived in Camberwell on the Elmington Estate, in a slab-like tower block built in the 1950s. They moved there in the '60s. That's gone. So here we stand, my past, present and future. 'Come let's walk Nana and Grandad' (2020: 32)

Later on her walk, Wright is joined by the voices of young men, Rolan Adams, Rohit Duggal, Stephen Lawrence, Trayvon Martin and Ahmaud Arbery. All young men who were killed in racist murders, the first three are South Londoners killed between 1991-93 and the last two are African Americans who were racially murdered in 2012 and 2020. Wright reflects on how Ahmaud was killed while jogging in the countryside 'another reason to kill Black men is added to the list: exercising in nature.' (2020: 34). She continues: 'Whenever I've walked solo or in a group of Black people in the English

countryside, Kent or elsewhere, I've been made to feel unwelcome.' (ibid).

This tension between the urge to walk and the threat of racial harassment/violence is also at the heart of Garnette Cadogan's essay *Black and Blue* (2019). Reflecting on his formative experiences of walking in Kingston, Jamaica and comparing this to the constant scrutiny he is under as a black man walking New Orleans and New York City, he concludes:

'Walking while black restricts the experience of walking, renders inaccessible the classic Romantic experience of walking alone. It forces me to be in constant relationship with others, unable to join the New York flâneurs I had read about and hoped to join.' (2019: 142).

Carole Wright's walk highlights how classed and racial forms of power unfold through urban space in ways that are intimately entangled with the body and biography of the walker.

My next proposition is for a flâneuserie that *is multiple and based on a collective effort*. The flâneur walks solo but what about collective walking as a way to know the city? Here I am taking inspiration from Morag Rose, geographer and founder of the Loiterers Resistance Movement (LRM) in Manchester. Speaking at a British Sociological Association Cities event in 2018, the self-defined anarcho-flâneuse described the limitations of the figure of the flâneur: 'If anyone had told me as a queer crip woman from a council estate about the flâneur, I would've thought I couldn't do it.' Rose's PhD was based on conducting walking interviews with women in Manchester, taking an inclusive approach to walking – including wheels, sticks and mobility aids. She also, through the LRM, puts on a monthly dérive [a Situationist walking technique] in Manchester as a way to playfully explore the changing city and to 'reclaim it for revolutionary

fun'. This is an inclusive approach to walking that also makes urban exploration a collective endeavour.

Building on the theme of collective endeavour, my final example comes from the Blank Noise collective who stage interventions all over India and beyond to challenge male domination in public space. They illustrate my fifth proposition, for a flâneuserie that *can use attunement to power as the basis for interventions that challenge the status quo*. Blank Noise first started life as an MA thesis project by Jasmeen Patheja on women's experiences of public space and has evolved into 'a critical node within broader youth-led online activism in India (Mitra-Khan, 2012: 114). Their actions against sexual street harassment have included *Did you ask for it?,* which encouraged women to send scanned photos of the clothes they were wearing when they were sexually harassed and the #meettosleep action, where groups of women challenge gendered expectations of public space by sleeping in parks. Their 'Step by Step Guide to Unapologetic Walking' seems particular pertinent for a discussion of the potentials of critical flâneuserie. This action challenged their online network of 'Action Sheroes' to think about and alter their gendered walking practices. Their instructions read:

'*walk* very very slowly. *walk* without your phone. *walk* without your eyes fixed to the ground. *walk* in the middle of the pavement. *walk* with your chin a little raised. *walk* without your bag. *walk* without your sunglasses. *walk* with your shoulders leaned back. *walk* looking at passersby. *walk* alone. *walk* alone. *walk* at 5am. 3am. 2pm. Noon. Midnight. 8pm. 3pm. *walk* humming a song. *walk* whistling. *walk* day dreaming. *walk* smiling. *walk* swinging your arms. *walk* with a skip. *walk* alone. *walk* wearing clothes you always wanted to wear but could not because you thought you might be 'asking

for it'. *walk* without a dupatta. *walk* without your arms folded. *walk* without a clenched fist. *walk* smiling. *walk* smiling. *walk* smiling.' (Blank Noise, 2008)

While the network is one of predominantly English-speaking, middle-class women and we might ask *who* feels able to put their body on the line by taking on the mantle of 'Action Shero', Mitra-Khan argues that Blank Noise have been critically reflexive of their privileges, pointing to their work with civil society groups, their translation of their campaigns into vernacular Indian languages and their halting of a campaign that was critiqued for characterising perpetrators as lower caste/working class men (2012: 124). This is walking that is not only attuned to how different forms of power unfold in and through public space but uses walking as direct action to challenge the status quo. It is at once an individual action that is made collective through the collation of these walks online through social media.

**Conclusion**

This intervention aimed to move away from the figure of the flâneur in order to propose a critical flâneuserie made up of flâneuse fragments – ideas borrowed from a range of women activists, academics and artists – who use walking in their research and practice. The intention was to go beyond discussing the work of 'the usual suspects' in discussions of walking, to rethink what feminist walking as a critical method looks like and could look like in the future. At the heart of this endeavour is the idea that feminist critical walking practices can provide insights into the urban and make visible and challenge forms of spatial dominance – including those of gender, race and class. I wanted to join up these flâneuse fragments to suggest a range of propositions for critical feminist walking.

This is not to suggest that all flâneuserie must tick a set of boxes. On the contrary, by drawing across these very different forms of walking, I hope to point to the diffuse ways that walking can be used. Thus, my final proposition is for a flâneuserie that *can provide insights into the urban without claiming to be complete or universal.*

To summarise, the flâneuserie I am advocating here:

    a) is attuned to how different forms of power unfold in and through public space

    b) uses attunement to power as the basis for interventions that challenge the status quo

    c) uses walking to read the past, present and futures of spaces, against the grain

    d) recognises that experiences of walking are situated and embodied rather than universal

    e) is multiple and based on a collective effort

    f) provides insights into the urban without claiming to be complete or universal.

While I was briefly tempted to write these propositions in the form of a manifesto, this seemed 'out of step' with the kind of walking practice I am advocating here, which is communally formed, unfinished and constantly evolving.

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# Walking as an artistic practice

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## Abstract

Since the late 19th century, with the flânerie celebrated by Charles Baudelaire's literature, much has changed regarding both the intellectual framework and environments that surround walking as an aesthetic practice.

If walking as an aesthetic practice first became a way to apprehend a new city life and an increased urban population, potentiated by the industrial revolution, by the mid-20th century these observations had turned into actions.

And in the process walking also gained different dimensions and meanings.

As Tolentino Mendonça states "Nothing provides us more the measurement of real than the footstep and the hand". The sense of scale provided by walking is one of the best measurements the human being has of its own surroundings. That particular sense of scale has contributed to turn the act of walking — even more than into an aesthetic practice — into an artistic practice. This paper will depart from this premise.

The action of walking as an artistic practice is presented in a variety of forms, contents and works proportional to the diversity of human behaviour, which is to say – depending on the artist's intention, walking takes on different statements. The works of Vito Acconci, Hamish Fulton, Richard Long and Francis Alys will be highlighted, but also examples of anonymous initiatives that were triggered and developed from earlier artworks. The paper will conclude with a few remarks about the role of these artistic initiatives in the contemporary social context.

## Introduction

As Tolentino Mendonça states "Nothing provides us more the measurement of real than the footstep and the hand." (Mendonça, n.d.). The sense of scale provided by walking is one of the best measurements the human being has of their own surroundings. That particular sense of scale has contributed to turn the act of walking — even more than into an aesthetic practice — into an artistic practice. We will depart from this premise.

Potentiated by the Industrial Revolution, cities have changed drastically, becoming places of craft and labour of enormous proportions. The city expanded and began to hold and host all types of activities, from daytime occupation to night-time leisure. One could observe large masses of people walking to their work places, dealing with everyday life affairs and meetings. The urban grid was crowded, all the time.

By the end of the 19th century, this idea of movement and walking was associated with the very idea of the city, and part of the urban

imaginary. In this context one literary figure emerges — the *flâneur*. This character was most celebrated and defined in Charles Baudelaire's literature. It was probably inspired by Edgar's Allan Poe's short story *The Man of the Crowd* (1840). Baudelaire was one of the first translators of Poe's body of work.

In his *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* (1863), Baudelaire wrote a series of essays that presented key concepts related to the modern city and the anonymous crowd, such as the dandy, the *flâneur* or different gender behaviours. He praises a particular figure, the painter Constantin Guys — which he calls Mr. G. — and his behaviours as a man of the world:

> 'His interest is the whole world, he wants to know, understand and appreciate everything that happens on the surface of our globe.' (Baudelaire, 1964: 7)

The context in which this character moves, his domain, is the crowd, as in Edgar Allan Poe's short story. The *flâneur* character is then set. For the Baudelairian *flâneur*, a passionate observer, the crowd and its fugitive and inconstant movement is where he can live and fulfil his passion. He likes "to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world." Being an observer by nature, he enjoys his status as incognito.

In the first half of the 20th century, Walter Benjamin studied the relation between the urban context of Paris, with its arcades and symbolic meanings, and conceptualized for the first time the figure of the *flâneur*. For Benjamin, *flânerie* was an immediate consequence of the fact the city had burst in such proportions that it has become a vast landscape – thus his expression: "botanizing the asphalt." Unlike a mere spectator, who could be overwhelmed by all these urban attractions, and

forced to stop to absorb them, the *flâneur* walks and keeps moving. He glides through the crowd. It is during this wandering that he satisfies his inner curiosity about what surrounds him:

> 'There was the passer-by breaking through the crowd, but there was also the flâneur, who needs space and does not want to lose his privacy. Otiose, he wanders as a personality, protesting against the division of labour that turns people into experts. And he also protests against their excessive dynamism.' (Benjamin, 2006: 55).

Rebecca Solnit, in *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2000), has a chapter devoted to the figure of the *flâneur*.

> 'The crowd itself seemed to be something new in human experience — a mass of strangers who would remain strange — and the *flâneur* represented a new type, one who was, so to speak, at home in this alienation.' (Solnit, 2000: 198)

Of course this figure existed in a specific context – that of Paris of the mid-19th century. Benjamin would associate the *flâneur* with the Arcades — covered shopping streets that intensified the blurred illusion between interior and exterior space. The arcades were pedestrian streets with roofs made of new materials such as steel and glass filled with high-end stores with luxury goods. There was this mix between public and private space, consumerism and voyeurism. Who was there, what was sold there. "The arcades allowed Benjamin to link his fascination with the stroller to other, more Marxist themes." (Solnit, 2000: 200) The *flâneur* was both visual and subversive. He visually consumed goods produced by the speed of industrialisation, but at the same time not actually being part of the process: just a mere observer, mingled in the crowd, apart from their purposes.

This subversion of the *flâneur*, problematized by Benjamin, will be a subject we will return to later. For now, we will focus on the importance of the *flâneur* perceived as a visual catcher, a more Baudelairian idea, as someone who captures furtive moments, unexpected encounters, fugitive coincidences.

## Walking as an artistic practice

The possibility of developing such potential — the exploration of the poetics in the urban spectacle — was perhaps first shown in literature during the 19th century but developed, later on, in visuals arts. The character of the *flâneur* was reshaped during the 20th century and endured through time as part of the urban imaginary.

The actions of walking and wandering have been affirmed as aesthetic practices. What started as an instinctive behaviour in the urban context was afterwards theorized, first in surrealist writing, and then in the *dérive* of the *Internationalle Situationniste*. Guy Debord created *Theórie de la Dérive* (1957), which defended the creation of constructed situations pursuing authentic desires, experiencing life and adventure in order to liberate the individual from their daily bustle. A conceptual term was developed to describe this pursuit, *psychogeographie*, as the study of the impact specific effects, triggered by a geographical ambience, would have on an individual's emotions and behaviours. These studies led to the development of experimental *dérives*, which were non-planned tours in urban contexts, entirely directed by the feelings of each individual. These situationist experiments quickly spread into urban performative practices with an artistic slant. Since then, the city became the trigger and holder of performances, site specific works and happenings based on walking and wandering as artistic practices.

A key example is Vito Acconci's *Following Piece* (1969), where the street, as context for wandering, is merged with a performative process. He developed a scheme and a set of rules for this piece: "Choosing a person at random in the street, any location, following him wherever he goes, however long or far he travels (the activity ends when he enters a private place – his home, office, etc...)" (Ward et al., 2002:3 9). This performance resulted in a series of pictures, showing Acconci stalking randomly chosen strangers through the streets of Manhattan. Acconci subjected his work to external factors: "I let my control be taken away – I'm dependent on the other person... My positional value counts here, not my individual characteristics." (Ward et al., 2002:39). He would choose the public space in which to develop his work and relied on the secrecy and anonymity it provided. He was blending with the crowd. This reminds us of the man Edgar Allan Poe chased in his story:

> 'Then came a craving desire to keep the man in view — to know more of him. Hurriedly putting on my overcoat, and seizing my hat and cane, I made my way into the street, and pushed through the crowd in the direction which I had seen him take; for he had already disappeared. With some difficulty I at length came within sight of him, approached, and followed him closely, yet cautiously, so as not to attract his attention. (...) These observations heightened my curiosity, and I resolved to follow the stranger withersoever he should go.' (Poe, 1840).

Acconci's *Following Piece* can be perceived as a reshaped *flânerie*, in this sense of combination of urban context and crowd, but also appropriating Debord's *dérive urbaine* and its non-planned tours in urban landscapes. Acconci, as the *flâneur*, is an incognito.

But his work is also a performance that sets the action as more important than the actual formal

shape. By the 1960's and 1970's we can observe the beginning of a process of dematerialization of the artwork, being experiences and artistic creation processes validated as art in themselves (Lippard, 1997). Those were also the times where a critical perspective of the institutions emerged, which were under increasing pressure from market logic and by consumption. This led some artists to work outside their studios in unfamiliar locations and with non conventional materials – as can be attested to in the Land Art or Anti-form proposals. During this time, artistic practices merged, becoming hybrid and expanded as Rosalind Krauss explained in her essay *Sculpture in expanded field* (1979).

Lucy Lippard traces a relation between the arts and walking, defined not by performance but actually by sculpture. Carl Andre's conception of a sculpture as a road gives us that dimension:

> 'My idea of a piece of sculpture is a road. That is, a road doesn't reveal itself at any particular point or from any particular point. Roads appear and disappear...We don't have a single point of view of a road at all, except a moving one, moving along it.' (Lippard, 1983: 125)

*Secant* (1977) marks an innovative approach towards sculpture, showing its importance was not in the technique or material but rather a question of positioning. This horizontal sculpture was installed on the grounds of Nassau Country Art Museum and marked in perspective a line of timber. It places emphasis on exploration, acting as a path which the viewers must follow in order to perceive its totality. By walking alongside the piece, the viewers are "forced" to see the surroundings. This gives the sculpture a sense of place, something Carl Andre will even later state about his work —"sculpture as place".

This notion of specific placement for a specific

action, in this case, walking,  is also perceived in Richard Long's work *A line made by walking* (1967). Here we understand walking is an intentional part of an artistic action by the legacy it wants to leave. Long created a transitory line in the landscape, repeatedly walking back and forth on the lawn. The artist then photographed this action using an angle where the sunlight enhanced the line even more. He later described this action, explaining that he caught a train from Waterloo Station, travelling south-eastward, and after 30 kilometres he got off the train. He then walked and found the field that would become the place for his intervention. He was starting to set what would be his artistic language: walking outside, where, along the path, he collects and reorganizes the elements he finds, such as stones, branches, traces left on the ground. He started by photographing these actions, and later resorted to maps, drawings, graphics, words.

*A line made by walking* is an intentional act. This is shown not only by the support where the action was imprinted, a lawn easily manipulated using few resources, but also because the artist had the intention to register the final result of his action.

Let's come back to Tolentino Mendonça statement: "Nothing provides us more the measurement of real than the footstep and the hand". Proportion is the relation between the dimension of an object, while scale is the relation between ourselves with that other objectual dimension. Scale is our own measurement with what surrounds us. The sense of scale provided by walking is one of the best measurements the human being has of its own surroundings. This beautiful sentence made me think of all these works with different intentions but resourcing the same sense of scale — our own footsteps.

Stanley Brouwn's work plays with exactly that same scale, incorporating the footstep in several works. He presents walking, and its seminal scale,

as an artistic process.

*Pedestrian Footsteps on Paper* (1960) was an action where Brouwn laid paper sheets on the street and waited for a cyclist or pedestrian to create the art work as they cycled or walked over them. The passers-by, who didn't realize, were the creators of these works that capture movement, time, and materialize a footstep. The artist placed the act of creation onto others, demarking himself from the authorship.

From the 1970's onwards, Stanley Brouwn recorded his own footsteps in several cities, registering them on index cards, then storing these in metal cabinets. What was in question in the several "Steps" artist books was his own autobiography measured and quantified by his feet, while at the same time demarking himself from being present.

Walking is our way to merge with our environment, diluting into space, becoming part of a territory. As we walk, we are shaping something new: we are also movement, we create a sense of measurement and scale with what's around us, we march towards a direction, towards a new space.

All these works are not by chance. They are acts of subversion. Subversion towards the grounds of the institutions, places we want to preserve, ways through which we want to mediate with.

> '(...) this history of walking is a First World, after-the-industrial-revolution history, about when walking ceased to be part of the continuum of experience and instead became something consciously chosen. In many ways, walking culture was a reaction against the speed and alienation of the industrial revolution.' (Solnit, 2000: 267)

So, even if walking is such a generalist action — since we all walk, and supposedly we all walk the same way — the underlying artistic intention in these works makes us see them in several ways. *Line made by walking* (1967) is outside the urban context and wishes to be ephemeral, *Secant* (1977) questions the monumental scale of sculpture and how it can be placed and apprehended, Brouwn sees in others the creative possibilities, resigning from the author role.

In a more political way, Francis Alÿs proposes a group of actions which are not only pushing the limits of the artistic object, but also challenging the urban context. In *Paradox of Praxis* (1997), what is at stake is what surrounds us, and the object the artist chooses to mediate that space with. This work is the record of an action carried out under the rubric of "sometimes making something leads to nothing." For more than nine hours, Alÿs pushed a block of ice through the streets of Mexico City until it completely melted.

For Gabriel Orozco, wandering is a trigger and key-element for his body of work process, one he used in the many cities he has lived in. He uses photography as a way to capture the details he encounters along his everyday routes. He also uses ductile materials, common in everyday life, as in the work *Yielding Stone* (1992), where the artist built a sphere of grey plasticine. The sphere had exactly his weight and was meant to be rolled down the streets of Monterey, in Mexico, to record anonymous footprints, as well as to absorb particles and residues. In the light of his work, sculpture is rethought as a set of tensions between public and private space. He wants to take away weight to sculpture, rather promoting encounter.

> 'How do we take weight out of sculpture? (...) Yet, over the centuries many artists have brought the beauties of lightness actual and illusory, to the most heavy of art forms. This is the road Orozco has chosen in part to assert his conviction that the aesthetic act takes place in an encounter, not in a object.' (Temkin, 2010: 173)

I think this is it. Is not that walking itself is the motor for artistic creation, but rather that the walking makes possible the encounter. All these works are linked by the same scale, the footstep, even if some generate work directly from it, like Acconci, Long or Brouwn, while others might mediate the footstep with yet another object, linked with the artist's own body – Alÿs with a block of ice he can push, Orozco with a ball of plasticine with the same weight as himself.

## Conclusion

To conclude: since the late 19th century, with the *flânerie* celebrated in Charles Baudelaire's literature, much has changed regarding both the intellectual framework and environments that surround walking as an aesthetic practice.

If walking as an aesthetic practice first became a way to apprehend a new city life and an increased urban population, potentiated by the Industrial Revolution, by the mid-20th century these observations had turned into actions.

And in the process walking also gained different dimensions and meanings.

> 'If there is a history of walking, then it too has come to a place where the road falls off, a place where there is no public space and the landscape is being paved over, where leisure is shrinking and being crushed under the anxiety to produce, where bodies are not in the world but only indoors in cars and buildings, and an apotheosis of speed makes those bodies seem anachronistic or feeble. In this context, walking is a subversive detour, the scenic route through a half-abandoned landscape of ideas and experiences.' (Solnit, 2000: 12)

I would go back to the role of subversion of the *flâneur*: walking nowadays is an act of resistance and subversion towards what surrounds us. And yet, what is even more fascinating is all these small artistic actions of the mid and late-20th century are now becoming part of counterculture movements like *Follow a Stranger* (2018). *Follow a Stranger* is an action promoted by Miloš Tomić, where he encourages people to use strangers, following them in order to explore the city — reminding us of Vito Acconci's *Following Piece*, now in a broader and extended way.

Maybe it is what we all need. To perceive and see our surroundings through someone else's eyes. Walking into new ways.

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# Community Policing in Lisbon – Walking for safer neighbourhoods

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**tags**

community policing, police foot patrols, participatory planning, police-community partnerships

## Abstract

One of the main challenges in local policing relates to the need to build safer neighbourhoods through the establishment of effective and trustful relationships between police and citizens. The community policing in Lisbon, developed by the Lisbon Municipal Police in 2009, has been built from the establishment of safety partnerships in the process of putting in place community policing projects in different neighbourhoods of the city to tackle security concerns, by engaging citizens and local partners to work with the police as co-producers of community safety. The importance of the foot patrols by designated police officers in the neighbourhoods contribute not only to a closer relationship between police and citizens, enhancing their feelings of safety, but also to a better police understanding and knowledge of the neighbourhoods vulnerabilities and potentialities. This enables an improvement of the design and implementation of more effective and sustainable responses to the reduction of the feeling of fear of crime and for citizens to feel their neighbourhoods as safer and better places to live in.

## Introduction:
## Foot patrolling in community policing

Community policing emerges as a model of police action which sets forth the philosophy that citizens contribute to police strategies, becoming the police and citizen co-producers in the prevention of crime (Skolnick and Bayley, 1986 cit. Cox, 1996: 33). It is a policing model mainly characterized by the assignment of police officers to patrol specific neighborhoods, alongside the establishment of partnerships with social organizations (Brodeur, 1999: 15). It is an approach that favors security and peace over crime control, based on the premise that the first and main duty of police is to ensure public tranquility (Waddington, 1999: 207). Therefore, it is a bottom-up model that has the goal of ensuring the quality and efficiency of  police performance in providing security and feelings of safety, by reducing and preventing crime and public disturbances, maintaining a trustworthy positive image of the police (Virta, 2007: 2). One of the main practices of community policing is the foot patrol (the "beat") by the long term assignment of police officers to the same neighbourhood, in order to establish the relationship between the police and citizens, since geographical stability of officers should promote trust to citizens (Bullock, 2014:105).

According to the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) of the U.S. Department of Justice, community policing is "a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime" (2014: 1). In this sense, community policing is a model that uses a problem-oriented approach open to citizen participation, focusing on community safety partnerships to identify and solve community problems. This model also underscores the importance of citizen approval of police intervention, facilitating both the cooperation of citizens with the police and their recognition that the main role of police services is preventing, and not reacting to, crime and disorder (Bullock, 2014:106). The community policing model, by embodying these partnership and problem solving approaches, increases police effectiveness and legitimacy, which, according to Oliveira (2006: 85), can be analyzed in three dimensions: the *spatial dimension*, meaning the physical presence of the police officers, through foot patrols in a designated neighborhood, taking into account the security priorities identified by citizens; the *temporal dimension*, referring to the community policing officers' working schedules that are adapted to those citizens' needs and priorities; the *relational dimension*, relating to the foot patrolling by the same team of police officers' that are easily recognized by citizens, interacting with a more familiar, accessible and humanized communication style. The relational proximity of police to citizens, and this humanized dimension addressing security problems, based on police-citizen dialogue, gives a new conception of the function of the police, showing the police's greater concern for social cohesion when engaging with citizens.

Working in partnership enables the police to tackle problems from new and innovative perspectives (Homel and Brown in Tilley and Sidebottom, 2017: 537). Therefore, under this policing model, the police expect social partners to contribute to the identification of, and cooperation in solving, community problems that can trigger situations of crime and violence and/or increase the feeling of insecurity (e.g. incivilities in public space, truancy or inadequate planning of public space). Also, some initial studies on community policing (Kelling et al, 1974; Monjardet, 1996) stated that the results of this policing model revealed that although foot patrolling alone did not reduce crime, it did facilitate more favorable citizen responses to frequent and informal contact with police officers, bettering citizens' perception of safety in their neighbourhood. Some studies have also shown that the role of the police is essential in reducing the occasions for the practice of offenses, namely through the presence of police officers in the field (Oliveira, 2006: 82 cit. Wilson and Kelling, 1982). As Wycoff and Skogan pointed out, this policing model, besides generating benefits for citizens indicated by reduced levels of concern about crime, also brings change to, and allows innovation within, the police institution, since changes are more readily accepted by those who participate in the process of creating it, and that "police officers' attitudes can shift from more traditional views of policing to ones that are more in line with police-community involvement in problem identification and resolution" (2018: p.84-85).

**The Lisbon Community Policing model**

The Lisbon Municipal Police (LMP) is a service integrated in the structure of the Lisbon Municipality, with a specialized body of armed and uniformed police officers and a civilian staff,

whose main mission is to ensure the compliance with all laws and regulations relating to local authorities' competences, and whose additional mission is to cooperate with the national police in maintaining public tranquility and in protecting local communities. Under this mission, the LMP has been developing a model of community policing that incorporates a participatory planning methodology, by engaging citizens and local partners to work with the police on the introduction of the Community Policing Officers in a new neighbourhood. This participatory planning methodology began to be developed in 2009, when LMP conducted a pilot-experience in community policing in *Alta de Lisboa*, a mixed housing area in the North of Lisbon[1], with the collaboration of an active local partnership – the Community Group of *Alta de Lisboa* (GCAL). The involvement of local partners was crucial to testing this model of policing, which required from local partners a pro-active role in planning the introduction of community policing officers in the territory. The community policing in *Alta de Lisboa*, carried out in partnership with the LMP, public and civil society organizations operating in the territory and representatives of local residents, was built upon five key principles (Saraiva, Matijosaitiene, Diniz and Velicka, 2016: 174) supporting the partnership involvement over time: (1) partnerships expected to take a proactive role in achieving security; (2) development of a cooperative and trusting relationship between police and citizens; (3) engagement of the local community in the planning, implementation and evaluation of community policing; (4) both a prevention- and problem-solving-oriented approach; and (5) openness by the police to incorporate ommunity contributions into police strategies.

During a one-year process of monthly meetings, the partnership worked to identify the territory's main security problems, to define the scope of community policing intervention and to determine what the community deemed desirable in the profile of the future Community Policing Officers (for example, key social skills, gender, neighbourhood knowledge). Based on the results, the LMP took on the task of improving the profile of the police officers within the community policing in *Alta de Lisboa*, and developed a training program to prepare the police team to start the patrolling. November 2011 was the beginning of the foot patrol by the Community Policing Team, comprised of two police officers, who also started to attend the safety partnership meetings. The community policing pilot-experience in *Alta de Lisboa* helped in guiding the LMP to transfer this model of policing to other Lisbon neighbourhoods, being recognized later as an example of good practice by the Global Network on Safer Cities (ICPC, EFUS and UNHSP)[2] and by the Intercultural Cities Programme of the Council of Europe[3].

Following the pilot-experience in *Alta de Lisboa*, the community policing model was transferred to other Lisbon territories based on the same participatory planning methodology, but with certain adaptations. The participatory planning consists of four steps: i) Establishing the police-community safety partnership; ii) Building a participative security diagnosis of community problems; iii) Developing the profile of the Community Policing Team; and iv) Selecting and training the Community Policing Team. The outcomes of the security diagnosis and of the Community Policing Team profiling will inform the internal selection process of the police officers and the design of the training course to prepare

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1 http://www.costtu1203.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/LisbonCOSTWorkshop_FinalReport.pdf

2 https://www.gpplatform.ch/sites/default/files/100%20PROMISING%20PRACTICES%20ON%20SAFER%20CITIES.pdf

3 https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/safer-alta-de-lisboa

them for patrolling the specific neighbourhood. The selection process takes into account the desirable profile that citizens expressed for the police officers, combined with a set of features and skills based on community policing studies and assessments from the community policing projects already in place. Through an interview process with the police candidates that applied to do community policing work, matches are made not only for the most suitable candidates who meet the desirable profile (Image I), but also the police officers most fit for working together as a team to patrol the designated neighbourhood.



**Image I:** Community Policing Officer desirable profile Source: LMP, 2011

The community policing model is approached as policing which directs the police performance towards working in partnership and being citizen-oriented. In this context, during the training, special attention is given to the development and improvement of personal, social and relational skills, particularly in terms of addressing assertiveness, communication, team work, conflict management and problem-solving during the patrols. Police officers' knowledge of the social and cultural identity of the groups within a given community is critical to the successful implementation of the community policing project in that neighborhood (Diniz and Cruz, 2014).

This training practice facilitates police awareness of the various cultural identities of the territories, developing capacity building to manage community conflicts as well as a better understanding of the main problems of insecurity felt by the different community groups that usually do not interact with the police. In 2014 the Intercultural Cities Programme of the Council of Europe, through the initiative "Diversity Advantage Challenge"[4], recognised this practice as one of the 15 best real-life examples of the successful involvement of people from different cultural backgrounds in the design of innovative products, services, policies, projects and initiatives.

After the planning phase and the selection and training of the police officers, the designated Community Policing Team begin foot patrolling in the territory ( Image II).

Also, the police team integrates the community safety partnership and starts to participate in the monthly working meetings, discussing the main problems identified in the territory related to insecurity, and together reflecting on and building strategies and actions towards the resolution of these problems.

In January 2019, the LMP conducted interviews with community policing agents from six Lisbon neighbourhoods (Alta de Lisboa, Ameixoeira-Galinheiras, Alvalade, Baixa-Chiado, Bairro Padre Cruz and Mouraria), with the objective of knowing how the foot patrols were being carried out by the Community Policing Officers. The findings revealed that the continual police presence in neighbourhoods and the foot patrolling were considered decisive by the police officers for the establishment of a trustful relationship with citizens. It was reported that the population gets used to seeing agents in the neighbourhood, who are often known by their names, and approach them to signal security concerns. It was mentioned by police officers that the fast referral of those

4 https://edoc.coe.int/en/living-together-diversity-and-freedom-in-europe/6555-diversity-advantage-challenge-selected-initiatives.html

concerns reported by citizens, to the competent entities, is critical to build that trustful relationship. It was also suggested that if problems were solved in a short period of time, that would enhance citizens' trust in the police, since when citizens feel that their problems are solved, they would spread the message, conveying their trust in the police. These reported problems by citizens may range from fear of crime to antisocial behaviour or complaints related to public space conditions

In the Lisbon community policing model, the patrolling route is usually decided by the Community Policing Team, with officers explaining that their main focus in the foot patrolling is to solve problems in the public space and to respond to the requests of citizens they meet (e.g. towing abandoned vehicles, land clearing of shrubbery in areas of traffic and drug use near schools or the improvement and replacement of lighting in public space). According to the different neighbourhoods, officers usually choose two main types of foot patrolling: i) a random patrolling, where they meet the population and identify problems in the public space (for example, patrolling the streets of the whole neighbourhood), or ii) a strategic patrolling, in which they have a predefined beat taking into account previous situations already identified by the partnership as needing to be addressed in the public space.

This closeness with citizens and local partners allows a greater accessibility of police officers to be approached by citizens and to be responsive to their requests. Also, the more frequent contact

between police and citizens facilitates longer dialogues amongst them, also facilitates their approach from citizens ("People feel we are there to help them", Community Policing Team of Mouraria, 2019). It was mentioned by some officers that this trusting relationship facilitates contact with citizens to the point that sometimes citizens even ask them if they can send someone to solve problems in other areas of the city.

**Conclusion**

As described above, community policing is a philosophy that requires a transformation of the mindset not only of how the community sees the police, but also of the perception of the police towards the community. This policing model is embedded in a preventive and problem solving approach, in which police officers, through daily foot patrols, walk the streets and listen to citizens' problems. Thus, the presence and visibility of Community Policing Officers in the neighbourhoods increases citizens' feelings of security and facilitates the approach of the police to citizens and allows direct contact with citizens, since they feel more comfortable communicating problems to police officers they already know.

Being more open to citizens' participation, this model of policing is grounded on designated police teams patrolling the neighbourhoods and is also rooted in the principle that both police and

community should work together to identify local problems of insecurity and to jointly reflect and understand why they occur and persist, prompting network responses and community resources on exploring ways of mitigating and preventing them. The importance of the foot patrols by the designated police officers contributes therefore to a closer relationship between police and citizens, enhancing their feelings of safety, but also, to a better police understanding and knowledge of the neighbourhood's vulnerabilities and potentialities, enabling the improvement of the design and implementation of more effective and sustainable responses to the reduction of the feeling of fear over crime and for citizens to feel their neighbourhoods as safer and better places to live in.

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# Shaping starts with Walking

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on the primordial role of walking in architectural and urban design, addressing the second semester of the first year design studio taught at the Faculdade de Arquitectura (Lisbon School of Architecture) of the University of Lisbon in 2017-2018. The pedagogical approach to the exercise was based on walking as the first act of project and art, mainly proto-architectural sculpture, as the catalyst of Architectural composition.

Walking is always the first human appropriation of a place. In this case, walking a path from the Cais das Colunas, by the river, to the Pátio de D. Fradique, adjacent to the castle walls constituted the first acknowledgement of the site, registered in 10 photographs, creating a composed image from fragments. A model representing the walked public space supported by the ancient walls of Lisbon was made, revealing the relations between walls and path, vertical and horizontal, limits and continuity. This abstraction of reality allowed for a reduction of the complexity of the site and created a base for its understanding and the development of the project.

Art was used as a catalyst for architectural composition; mainly works of art that have a strong relation with spatial composition through excavation and geometrical abstraction.

The coded interpretation of the place crossed with the artistic references disclosed the possibilities for the project. The definition of a new path in continuity with the walked public space, connecting the different levels in presence, and the definition of a courtyard was the starting point for the occupation of the site: a line for walking; a patio for contemplating.

The detailed design of the spaces focused on composition and lighting and the manipulation of models allowed students to test, compare and shape spaces through cuts, incisions and additions. The program distribution along the shaped path acknowledged the vocation of each part of the site, designing a continuum between place, promenade, shape and use.

**Introduction**
**Walking in the city**

In "*Walking*", James Hillman presents his understanding of walking "*(...) not an idyllic hike by the ocean – but simply around the city for hours in early morning or late at night.*" (1980: 3), and also its deeper effect on people: "*Walking calms turmoil. (...) I have found in my psychological work with people that during periods of acute psychological turmoil, walking is an activity to which one naturally turns.*" (1980: 3). Resorting to both common sense and philosophical examples, Hillman reaches a possible usefulness of walking: aligning thoughts to an organic rhythm "*(...) and this organic rhythm of walking takes on symbolic significance as we place one foot after the other, left-right, left-right, in a balanced pace. Pace. Measure. Taking steps. With the soul-calming language of walking the dartings of the mind begin to form into a direction.*" (1980: 3)

Therefore, it seems that Hillman's interest in walking is the realignment of cardiac and mind rhythm through the steps one takes. The repeated, syncopated writing sends us to a constant repetition, as a mantra. The finality of walking is thus harmony, an alignment between macrocosm and microcosm, a way of placing the individual in contact with what is common to everybody. Walking might therefore be understood as a catalyst to what is archetypal within humankind, "soul-searching" or "soul-making" (Hillman, 1980: 3).

As sustained by Cliff Bostock, "*For Hillman the answer is in aesthetics. He insists that the soul, as producer of images, wants nothing more than beauty. Hillman's beauty is not "pretty" but that which arrests our attention. This follows because, he says, the fundamental quality of images is their movement. We are in the presence of beauty when our attention is stopped. Beauty is awe.*" (2002)

Therefore, we may argue, similarly to Francesco Careri (2016), that walking in the city may be understood as an aesthetic practice, one that not only allows aligning the rhythm of body and mind but also enables the uncovering of beauty in perceived images when we are in motion.

The experience of walking a path in the streets of the central part of Lisbon was the first step of the second semester of the first year design studio taught at the Faculdade de Arquitectura (Lisbon School of Architecture) of the University of Lisbon in 2017-2018. The pedagogical approach to the exercise was based on walking as the first act of project and art, mainly proto-architectural sculpture, as a catalyst for architectural production, always centred on the composition of an architectural promenade that both structured and revealed the place and the project.

**Walking along the second semester of the first year**

When Francesco Careri addresses the relation between walking and architecture he acknowledges that "*Walking, although it isn't the physical construction of a space, implies a transformation of the place and its meanings.*" (2016: 51) and, when addressing the seminal role of walking as a means to recognize the territory for early humans, acknowledges that "*the path is a space prior to architectural space, an immaterial space with symbolic-religious meanings*" (2016: 63).

Walking is always the first human appropriation of a place. In this case, walking a path from the Cais das Colunas, by the river, to the Pátio de D. Fradique, adjacent to the castle walls, constituted the first acknowledgement of the site, registered in 10 photographs, creating a composed image from significant fragments perceived during the

walking exercise. For this set of frames, we asked students to pay special attention to 5 concepts or binomials: focal points; positive / negative; interior / exterior; limits / transitions; matter / texture.



**Image I:** Photographs taken during the walk by the students

In a second stage, a model representing the walked public space supported by the ancient walls of Lisbon was made. Besides conferring a spatio-geographic order to the 10 images, this abstraction of reality, composed from a combination of two layers of reality through a process of "*de-layering*", allowed for a reduction of the complexity of the site and created a base for its understanding and the development of the project. If analytical interpretation drawing "*is a process which allows us to "see" certain formal configurations that are not perceivable in reality and, therefore, affects the way in which we see the city*" (Gandelsonas, 1991: 26), this interpretation model of reality selected two essential themes for the understanding of this part of the city that revealed the relations between walls and path, vertical and horizontal. While the walls of the city imply a limit, the ground of the path implies continuity and their interference implies the existence of transition spaces.
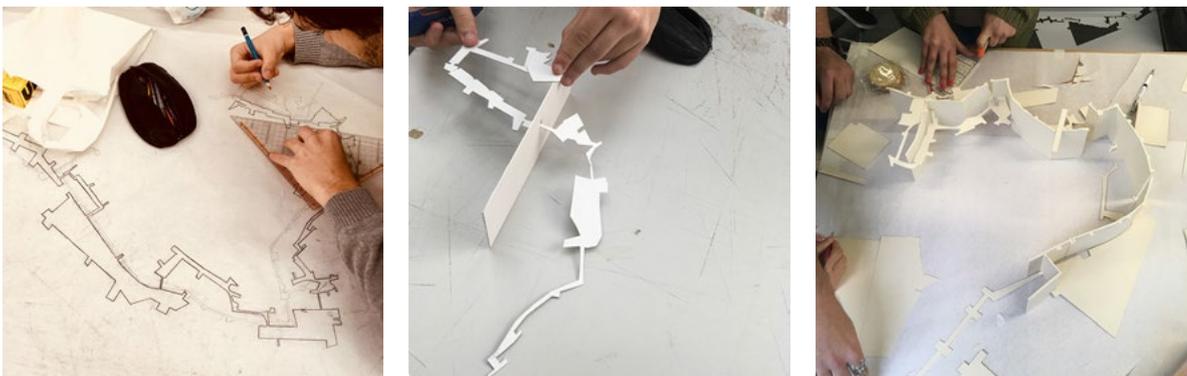


**Image II:**
Construction of the interpretation model of the walked path.

The  site model of Pátio de D. Fradique is an instrument to interpret the juxtaposition and interlacing of these elements: walked path (the continuity of the ground); city wall (both as support and limit); urban blocks and the Belmonte Palace (the appropriation of the wall); and the doorways of the wall (the transition of the limit). The site interpretation model thus refers and acknowledges simple operations such as splitting, aggregating and transitioning that may also be read in a significant number of XXth century and contemporary works of art.
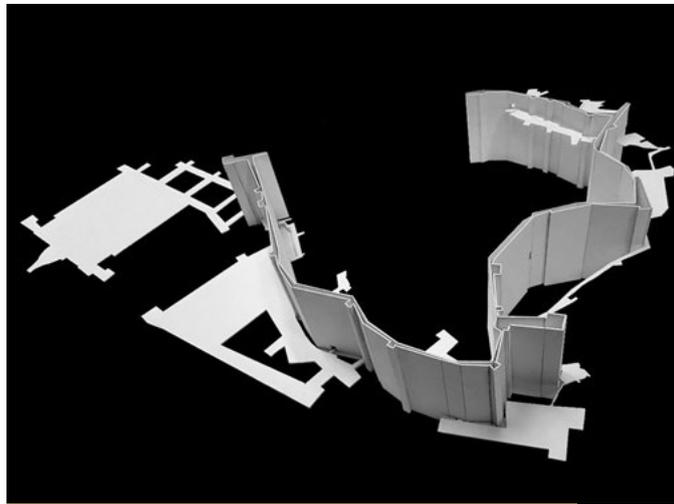


**Image III:** Interpretation model of the walked path vs. the city walls

To make this connection accessible to first year students, an induction of selected works of art was used as a catalyst for architectural composition, mainly works of art by Eduardo Chilida, Gordon Matta-Clark, David Umemoto or Allan Wexler which include similar operations such as cutting; splitting; incising; subtracting and sculpting.[1] This art induction allowed students to expand their cultural knowledge and stimulate their interest in connecting art fields.

The coded interpretation of the place crossed with the artistic references disclosed the possibilities for the project. The definition of a new path in continuity with the previously walked public space, connecting the different levels in presence, and of a courtyard was the starting point for the precise ordering of the site: a line for walking and a patio for contemplating. Two simple elements to order the space.
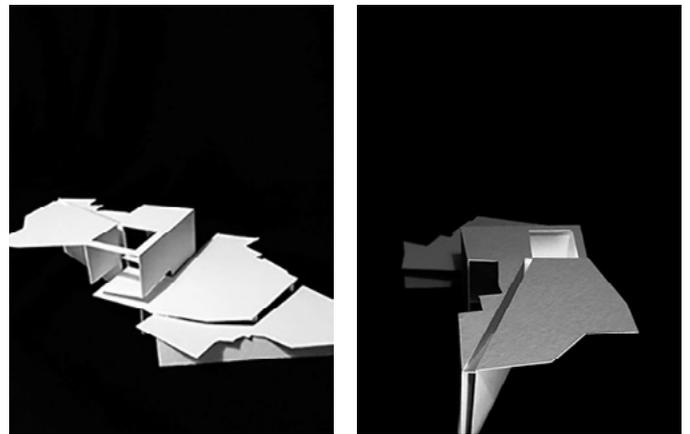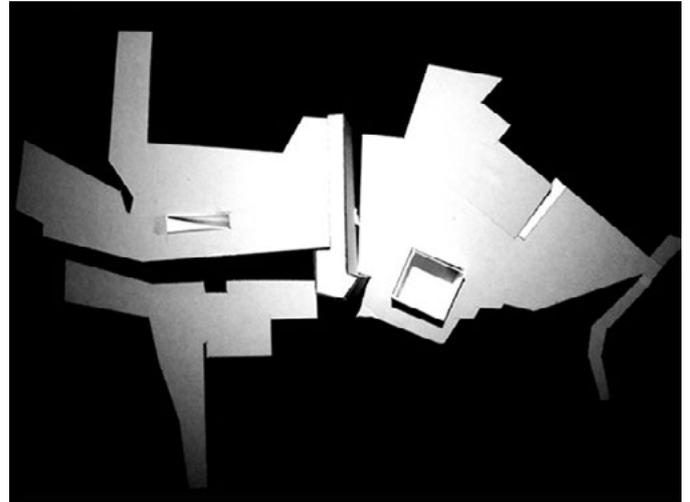




**Image III:** Patio + path site model.

The placement of this path and patio revealed adjacent spaces that could be colonized or appropriated by the programmatic spaces defined in the syllabus of the semester under
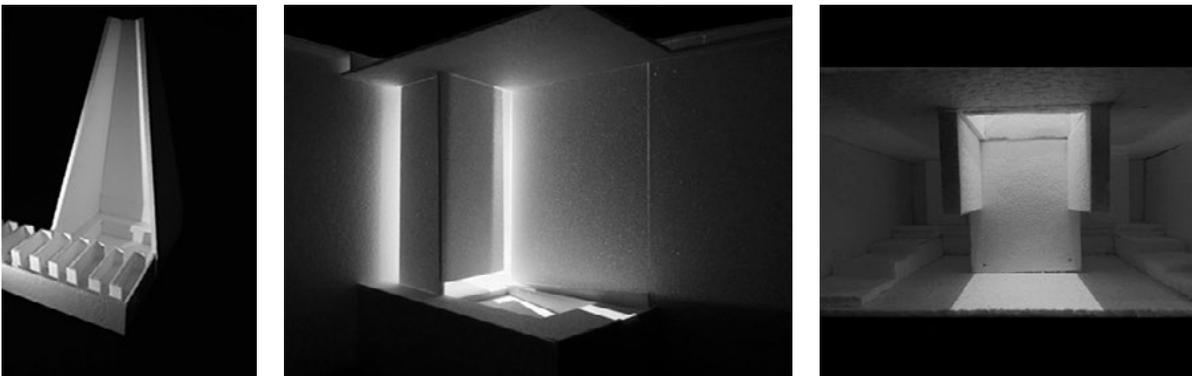
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1 "Breaking Ground", "Sheathing the Rift" and "Landscape: Excavation and Repair" by Allan Wexler, from the period between 2011 and 2014; several pararchitectural sculptures: "Starway", "Cubic Geometry", "Monument",  "Fragment", "Soma Cube" by David Umemoto; the project for Mount Tindaya and several paintings by Eduardo Chillida; and "Conical Intersect" (1975), and other works by Gordon Matta-Clark.

the coordination of João Luís Carrilho da Graça. The program distribution along the shaped path acknowledged the vocation of each part of the site, designing a *continuum* between place, promenade, shape and use.

For the composition of the spaces, the functions had to be translated into composition elements that must be placed and housed in spaces along the path. The transformation into a place came with the spatial definition of each component of the project: the kitchen and eating space is a room with a chimney and a table for 12 commensals; the 12 rooms are cells with a surface to rest and a surface to work, repeated and aggregated; the water is a simple tank. Spaces for the elements had to be found and composed in context with each other and the place. Focus at this level of first year is placed in composition and lighting. Therefore, instrumental manipulation of models allowed to easily test different designs in comparison and to shape spaces through cuts, incisions and additions.

**Conclusion**

The clear demarcation of sequential phases in the design studio work allowed students to fully focus on each elementary assignment and build a consequent line of thought through the exercise. The produced set of elements suggests an architectural transformation in continuity with an individual and original interpretation of the site. By the end of the semester, while gaining dexterity in rigorous model building and representation drawing of architectural spaces in different scales, students had learned to enjoy the city and how to incorporate an instrumental method to decode the city that starts by walking and reveals the project inscribed in the place itself.



**Image V:** Composition models of individual spaces

## Acknowledgements

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