

WALKING—ONE SENSE AT A TIME



WITH IRYNA ZAMURUIEVA

DO YOU KNOW

Do you know your street, the street you live on? Sure you know its name. And maybe even how long it is, where it starts and where it ends. Do you also know what kind of houses are standing in your street and who inhabits these houses? What kind of shapes can you find on your street and what colors and motions? And what about the smells? Do you know what the smells are that float through your street? Some gently caressing your nose, some making you hold your breath? What dinners can you smell through the windows open to let the smoke from the stove out? Have you ever touched your street? What are the materials your street is made of? Do they feel nice? Is there something hard and hostile? Or perhaps soft and welcoming on its ground or walls? Do you know where the rain water gathers in your streets to float into the sea? What part of the street is welcoming the sun at dawn first and which corner is last to see it disappear below the horizon or perhaps just behind another building on another street? Is there ever music on your street? Where is the best place to play on your street? Have you ever heard what people talk about in your street? What kind of plants grow on your street? Is there something you can eat that grows on your street? Do you know what birds sing early in the morning on the tree outside your door? Do you know what kind of bugs or other little creatures also consider your street their home? Is it your street?

YOUR STREET?

WAYS OF KNOWING

Why am I asking these question? Because for one, I see that the responses to anthropogenic climate crisis are absolutely disproportionate to its scale. The reasons behind the inadequate response are multifold and complex, varying from uneven effect distribution, seeming abstraction of the issue, power inequalities and parallel co-construction of a denial narrative. Somewhere among these reasons is our way of knowing the world.

The two big and competing concepts of knowledge-making are to gain knowledge through direct experience and through imagination(reason). One can find countless examples of philosophical and religious doctrines developing sophisticated argumentation in defence of one or the other. Today we seem to be living through a time, where - despite the centuries of critiques of reason (see Immanuel Kant, Frankfurt School, the French Existentialism^[1]) - we are still stuck with subjecting ourselves wholly to the realm of 'objective', 'quantitative', 'facts', dismissing a more artistic and sensory way of knowing the world as bias-prone, inconsequential and superfluous.

'Walking - one sense at a time' is a response to these reason-glorifying practices. We walk not against reason. We walk with an assertion that decades of 'evidence-based-decision-making' and scientific reduction have been clearly failing to create a meaningful cultural shift required for dealing with climate change. We walk after those who walked before us, in a sign of a protest, together with those around us, questioning & before those, who will walk the damaged planet they inherit. We walk to practice a more wholesome and coherent *way of understanding the world* through interpreting not only texts and talks but also using our senses. It is my hope that through attentively attending to our environments and recognizing the interconnected lively assemblages in it, we can become capable of producing a more ethical and grounded response that the climate change 'situation' calls for.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PLACES

Focusing on sensory experience is also about reconsidering our relationships with places. At a risk of stating the obvious, I want to point out that we live in a digital age, at an increasing pace. Yet, the implication of this claim for how we know the place and the relationship we build with it are significant. We store our data on clouds the presence of which we do not feel, our daily sustenance comes from places out of sight - notoriously earning itself a 'food from nowhere' definition, most of the time we have no idea what kind of soil it has been grown in or how it was taken care of. We are mobile bodies ourselves, in one day you can find yourself in a place half a world away, that nevertheless may look or smell exactly the same. *The world is small, connected and backed up on onedrive*. Sensory walking is the way to unplug from the digital representation of the world on our smartphone screens and pay attention to the corporeal existence that smells, sounds, feels and tastes in a infinite number of ways.

WALKING

I want to give the act of walking some attention. Most of us perform this act on a daily basis, as a form of getting somewhere, relaxing or thinking. Walking is a grounding exercise, confronting the walker with the 'here and now'. Yet, the act of walking can transport the one undertaking it to distant places, not merely physical, but of one's own imagination. Through strolling through city streets as well as the lanes of imagination, we explore whether the city can present itself to us anew, get us to re-imagine what it is and how it could possibly be different.

The relationship between walking and thinking is an ancient one and can be traced back to a number of philosophic, political and artistic practices^[2]. If you lived in ancient Greece, you could have found yourself among Aristotle's students, following him in a walking lecture, debating ideas on the go. If some centuries and continents apart you were to practice walking meditation - *kinhin* - with Buddhist monks, you might have found yourself mindfully walking, being aware of each step you take, your breathing and your thoughts. In no less ritual-like manner elsewhere, you could have joined a group in an exhausting spiritual journey - the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage. Skip to yet another place and you might have been a lucky companion to poet, naturalist and transcendental philosopher Henry David Thoreau *sauntering* (walking slowly, in a relaxed manner) through the woods of New England. Jump across the Atlantic and a century, finding yourself in a small southwestern German town of Todtnau and you may have heard of Martin Heidegger looping his trodden path in the Black Forest, in the breaks from his writing in the hut on top of the hill.

A new dimension of walking started to gradually emerge in 1920s Europe: walking was becoming art, as art itself was merging with everyday life. It is no coincidence that around the same time cities around Europe were undergoing major changes - the automotive industry was well on its way to ensuring mass car production, radically altering city infrastructure & appearance to facilitate the process. Walking was becoming a choice one had to make, since it was no longer the default way of getting places. It is within these circumstances that walking made it into the individualized and psychology driven Surrealists' ambulatory *urban drifts*, became rebellious gesture protesting the status quo of the Situationists' International *derives* and the mixing of art and everyday life, in *walking scores* of Fluxus^[3]. Walking was becoming a form of resistance - against the increasing speed and alienation of industrializing society, against consumerism culture and mass production. It is with these practices in mind I carry out the 'Walking - one sense at a time' series. More specifically, with the hope that through walking we can achieve a different kind of engagement with the everyday and with each other, that helps imagine healthy relationships between humans and non-humans in places we live in.

ATTENTION

A core notion, underpinning each part of the walks is the act of paying attention. The idea of explicit attention to attention comes from German philosopher Bernhard Waldenfels, whose work 'The Phenomenology of Attention'^[4], describes the implication of subjecting attention itself to a close up investigation. In the Western philosophical tradition, there were those who embedded attention within their studies of spirit, consciousness or action (see Plotin, St. Augustine, Descartes, Locke, Leibnitz). Waldenfels, building on the works of phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, places attention at the heart of experience.

According to Waldenfels, attention functions as a two-fold process: once you turn your attention to something, this means you ultimately turn it away from something else. To take it a step further, this process is never a private affair - you are being affected by something and you are then responding to it. Attention forms the foundation of creating and carrying out the 'Walking - one sense at a time' series. I do not explicitly point to objects of attention, I change rather the 'how' part in the paying attention process, anticipating that we will arrive at different *whats* through reimagining seemingly familiar objects, situations and environments while embracing the ability to sense in diverse ways. It is the question of how, as an artist, researcher and activist, I can be encouraging attention to flow to the intricate connections within our environments and hopefully growing to truly appreciate and care of them better.

SO WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS IN THE WALK

Evolving out of these artistic, philosophical ideas, 'Walking - one sense at a time' takes its participants on a conscious stroll, where we walk, pay attention, map & discuss our experiences. We start each walk in a different place in Auckland city center. We sniff, touch, look at and listen to things. Each walk has its own focus - its own sense that we dive into and adopt as a lens for our exploration.

Each walk has a similar structure, consisting of four parts. First of all we get gently in touch with the respective sense and establish the connection between ourselves and the environment through it. There are not many constraints here, yet a slight change in focus can bring changes in meaning. Afterwards we experiment with deepening our relationship with places we pass, using this particular sense. This is where things get exciting, fun, at times uncomfortable and most of the time playful. The participants go out of their way to pick things up, sniff them, lay on them, chew them, stare *discerningly*. The third part is where walkers come up with a theme they wish to explore. This part is their mini-research project or investigation, where some intense sensorial observation skills are once again put to work.

At the very end we come together at Pā Rongorongo - Auckland's city center community information hub - to map out our sensory experiences, discuss them and try to understand what they tell us about our society and environment. Each of the senses was repeated during day and night-time walks to allow for a broader range and variation of sensory experience collectable from the street.

TURNING ATTENTION TO

Equipped with the notion of deliberate attention, the question of what has been brought to attention during the walks emerges. First of all, ourselves and our own bodies. At the start of each walk prior to paying attention to the world outside, we first encounter our bodies' abilities to sense and interpret numerous sensory experiences. Through nose, ears, eyes, tongue, skin and essentially the whole nervous system. This initial turn inwards is not the end goal in itself. It is nevertheless a necessary step on the way towards practicing a more aware way walking and ultimately, being in the world. The understanding that we are bodies of our own moving through the sound-, smell-, touch-, taste- and sight-scapes is a necessary starting point to be able to attend to those at the latter stages of the walk.

The exact modes of working the notion of paying attention to your own body and then to the outside environment evolve differently depending on the walk.

1. In the smell-walk, for example, we spend first 15 minutes simply remembering that we have noses and becoming aware that there are smells, flowing in the city air. It is in a similar manner smell researchers, like Kate McLean and Victoria Henshaw, take people on olfactory walks, investigating urban smell-scapes through walking & sniffing^[5]. For some of us it was more of a challenge - finding any smells at all, but some others were able to describe smells continuously merging, transforming and shaping the smell-scape of the traversed territory. To delve deeper into this smell-scape, we then would advance from inhaling the smells in the air to deliberately going after them - sniffing the damp corners, picking up things, crushing them with our hands, sticking our noses into vents, chasing the odours that evoked curiosity.

2. When it comes to sound, we spend the first part of the walk in a relatively quiet place, especially at night-time, on edge of the pier, to explore the quiet, the sounds we make, slowly moving through space into a more noisy area. Hildegard Westerkamp^[6], one of the most prominent sound researchers, composers and artists, whose work on soundscapes was of great value for this project, suggests that if one can't hear their own body, this means that the soundscape in place is out of proportion and human scale does not matter here. While a curious and useful point to keep in mind, I find it would be an oversimplification to equate loud sound environments with bad. Being out-sounded by a construction drill is something entirely different from being dwarfed by a roll of thunder, or intense bird chatter in a rainforest. It is the connotation of those dominant sounds or smells and becoming aware of their sources in relationship to ourselves that makes a difference.
3. For touch, this part of tuning into active looking/touching and establishing an attentive relationship with the environment and ourselves is yet something else. In the touch-walk, we start with most familiar way of touching the city - with our hands (although, now, thinking about it, I would myself argue it is actually with feet & skin!). Some people get right into it, skipping to the next stage - and pay attention to the environment whole bodily - jumping and walking through things, some are somewhat reserved and place gentle touches on the things that get their attention - interesting leaf or a wall, some push themselves out of the comfort zone to explore something that they normally would not touch - a greasy surface of the car, floor tiles.
4. Looking at things, required more thinking than the other senses. While already being a dominant sense in our perception, it was a challenge to reframe it in a way that allows people to re-engage with it anew. What we did was very simple: in the first 15 minutes, each of us had to choose an object to look at, until it felt like it has been a really long time of looking at it. No timers or organized ways of controlling how long this interaction lasts - just as long as it takes to feel like a long time. Deceptively simple, this exercise in paying attention

to a concrete object for an extended amount of time raised an array of questions that I will mention below. After looking at objects we complicated it slightly and looked at interactions. Each walker received a unique pair of words, one indicating the *how* of looking and another, roughly, the *what*. Some of the combinations were: looking while standing still & non-human, looking down & intensity, looking up & repetition, looking while moving & human, looking far & difference. The mixing and matching of the prompts felt appropriately challenging, metaphorical and grounding at the same time.

To finish each of the walks we also pay attention through a theme: a space they'd like to explore, or a specific way of sensing, or a focus on some objects or interactions they were particularly interested in. Leaving this part of the walk open for interpretation allowed for creativity and curiosity to be poured into our walk. What comes out of these are wonderfully diverse and insightful explorations of topics like smelling out 'consumption'; listening in to wind instruments - excitedly picking up street objects that'd qualify for it; looking out for how colors contribute to 'gendering' a space; paying attention to what kind of music shops use to lure different target groups; searching for 'play' in the city; imagining the taste of smells and exploring things with eyes shut; searching for representation and targeting of women in the city and many more topics that we are not necessarily used to exploring whole-sensingly.

STORIES OF PAYING ATTENTION

In the short sections to come, I would like to focus on specific short stories that illustrate topics that came up in our post-walk discussions. Some of them are shorter, some longer, some more or less serious, but all have come from a certain way of being in the city, a way that isn't very common and a way that inspires a conversation. The stories, a combination of direct quotations, statements and thoughts, are written in a manner to recreate a sense of being in those conversations, where voiced ideas and observations came up, some taking off and leading us into a deeper exploration of the subject, some deserving a break to think and digest the experience, some causing applause, some laughter and some going on a tangent, leading us to ask even more questions than we had at the start. I hope that these stories can somewhat capture and convey the liveliness of our conversations.

WATER

We noticed water, in its various forms. Standing still, looking at various non-human objects.

Take, water features, for example:

"Why do we still use them?

It is so wasteful, with all the water shortages.

They are a status symbol, that is no longer relevant. A class signifier."

Isn't it a forced integration of 'nature' into the city, a token, a 'hey look, how sustainable our city is'

Isolating water from its lively ecosystem, decorating the street with its lifeless sounds, that are still nicer to hear than cars passing by?

These waters are different from those in Japanese water gardens that emphasize fragility of existence and are meant to be enjoyed by everyone.

And what about the water sprinklers, those in the hallways meant to drive those, who already have no better place to sleep, away. What does water in the city mean for them?

Abstracting water into a symbol, of status, of threat, of a 'nice-to-have-design-feature', stripping it of its mauri, its lively force.



A three-course touch-feast:

first you get the lichens - dry and

You can still feel

flaky, crumbling under your fingertips,
the teeth of the tool

then sharp and stoney rock
that cut it.

and finally some soft moss.

It was a sensory symphony.

STORIES OF FADING ATTENTION

In the short sections to come, I would like to focus on specific short stories that illustrate topics that come up in our post-walk discussions. Some of them are shorter, some longer, some more or less serious, but all have come from a certain way of being in the city, a way that isn't very common and a way that requires a conversation. The stories, a combination of direct quotations, statements, and quotations, are written in a manner to recreate a sense of being in the conversations, where voiced ideas and observations come up, something taking off and leading us into a deeper exploration of the subject, a time deserving a break to think and digest the experience, some causing applause, some laughter and some going on a tangent, leading us to ask even more questions than we had at the start. I hope that these stories can somehow capture and convey the liveliness of our conversations.

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There is no generic
You can still feel
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Auckland Auckland.





**There is no generic
smell of Auckland.
It's the fusion of
them all that makes
Auckland Auckland.**



I was



looking

for a

place

that was

quiet.

Do all

objects

have to


fulfill a

purpose?

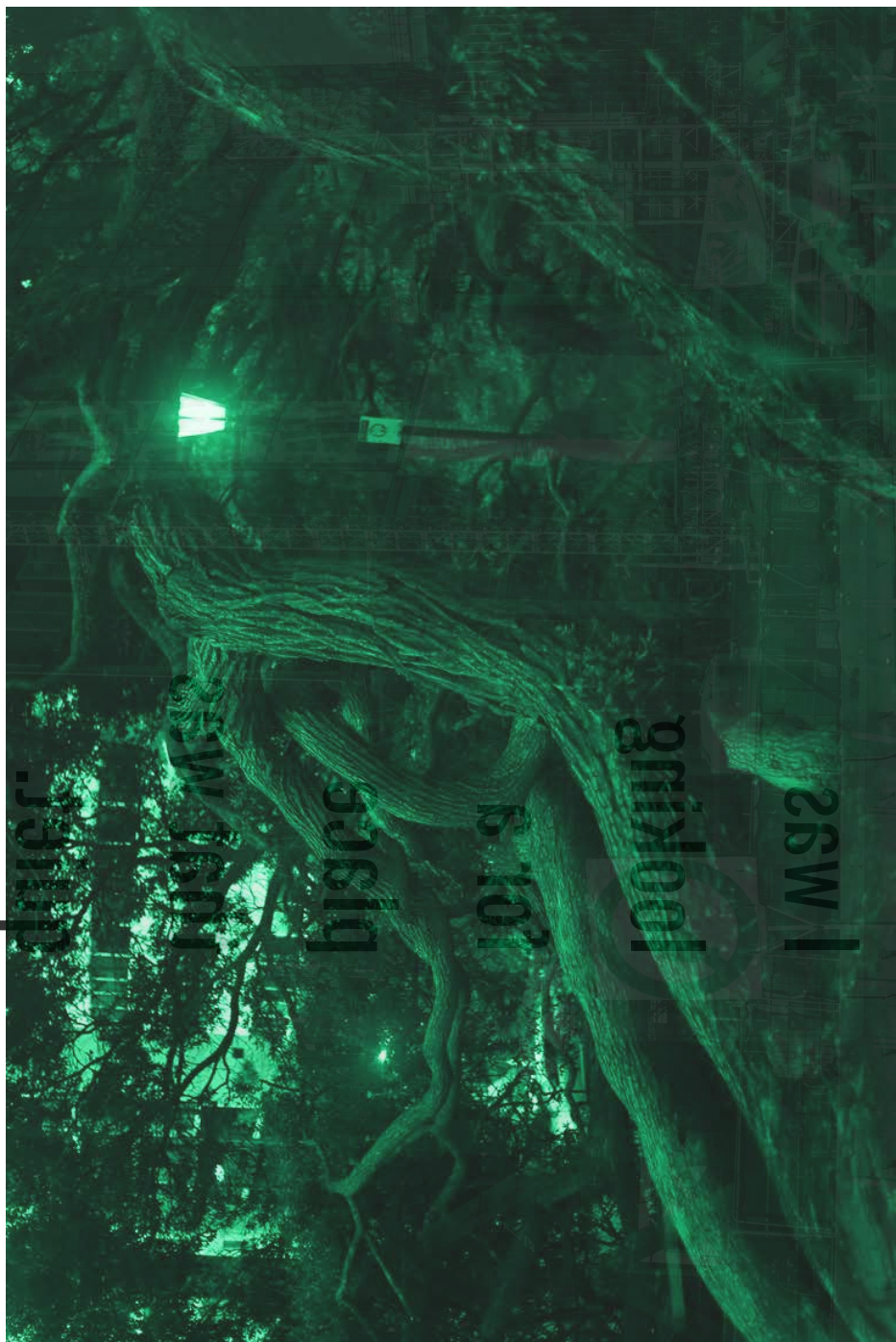


Ured za zaštito okoliša i prirodne sile





**I was
I liked touching
looking
trees more than
for a
concrete things,
place
maybe it's because
that was
I grew up on a farm.
quiet.**



I liked touching
trees more than
concrete things, at me,
it was glaring back at me,
maybe it's because
a black shiny dome.
I grew up on a farm.

CCTV CAMERAS

"I was staring at it and it was staring back at me. A shiny black dome, glaring." It makes you feel watched, I know that it is supposed to do just that. Does it make you feel safer? Or on the contrary, more concerned? Who is it there, watching you? Watching you?

TREES

"I didn't want to get off a tree that I climbed, I felt its coolness on my cheek, I felt connected to it." I was at first confused, how do I find something so "connected" in a city - is there anything in balance here? I asked myself, you know, a representation of a 'perfect balance' when I found it. It was a really massive big tree on a quiet street, and I thought 'it's a bit like this tree' - standing in a state of balance that I found in my life. I was standing at the foot of the tree, looking up at the canopy, the concrete pavement, the buildings on its side, and I felt a sense of 'density' in slow motion. There must be no other place where I can find it briefly, but when you stand and look at it, you feel a sense of an extraordinary process. I hugged 6 trees, it was a bit like I was hugging a concrete thing, not a tree. It's because I grew up on a farm. Wrapping myself around a tree in a field, while I was looking at it emanating a warmth. Was it mine or not?

FOOD

1. "How is the food represented through advertisement?" Look, here they try to embody all senses, capturing steam evaporating from a hot soup on the poster, you can almost smell it. Look at this other one, there is no food here at all, just boxes, colorful boxes of various sizes, concealing their insides, convincing you to buy it, hey look, it comes in such a pretty package. Look, this other poster sells you a feeling of sharing a meal with your friends, everyone laughing, with a slice of pizza in their hands. Is it the aroma, the instagrammable packaging or the sense of community you would like you your meal, please? What is food actually, you know?

I grew up on a farm. I

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these were things

I liked coming



CCTV CAMERAS

"I was *staring* at it and it was staring back at me. A shiny black dome, glaring." It makes you feel watched, I know that it is supposed to do just that. Does it make you feel safer? Or on the contrary, more concerned? Who is it there, watching you? Watching *of* you?

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I was at first confused, how do I find something 'balanced' in the city - is there anything in balance here? I asked myself what would be a representation of a 'pure balance'? And when I found a tree, it was a really majestic big big tree, on Queen Street, and I thought 'this is it!' - this tree growing in the middle of the city that was pure balance for me. I was staring at the tree roots breaking beneath the concrete pavement, crumbling it on its sides as they emerge. It was an 'intensity' in slow motion. There might be nothing happening if you balance at it briefly, but when you stop and look at it you realize the scale of this extraordinary process.

I hugged 6 trees, it was nice. I liked touching them more than concrete things, maybe it's because I grew up on a farm.

Wrapping myself around a tree in Alberni after a while I noticed it emanating warmth. Was it mine or its?

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CCTV CAMERAS

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I hugged 6 trees, it was nice. I liked touching them more than concrete things, maybe it's because I grew up on the farm.

Wrapping myself around a tree in Albert Park, after a while I noticed it emanating warmth. Was it mine or its?

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2. Walking out one a fast-food chains, we are *imagining* the *sounds* of breakfasts, contrasting what may sound like a healthy breakfast with an unhealthy.

Crunching of something fresh, light crackle of an egg shell coming off, gentle and hardly audible sound that the tea leaves falling on the bottom of the ceramic cup.

Sizzling oil, someone's proclaiming "Number seventeen, your order is ready!", the sound of a plastic spoon sliding against the walls of a disposable cup, mixing in the sugar.

Which would you prefer?

OBJECTS

1. "A three-course *touch*-feast: first you get the lichens - dry and flaky, crumbling under your fingertips, then sharp and stoney rock and finally some soft moss.

It was a sensory symphony."

2. "There are these benches in front of St. Kevin's Arcade, I was *looking* at them for a really long time." There are four of them facing inwards and only one of them outwards. How does this influence interaction? Perhaps this shape followed the fence behind it separating the pedestrian area from the road.

"But even if it is asymmetrical (or chaotic) - Why do i care so much?!" Wondering what makes a 'disorder' a disorder. Questioning human's desire to make order. "Why did I care so much, too, when I was looking at the top of the building, where one window was different from the rest, it made so annoyed, I don't understand why..."

"For me these benches were so pleasant to *look at* - a contrast of wrought iron and simple wood, it reminds me of my grandfather who used to work in a factory."

3. I was *looking* at a glass case in an window of an abandoned shop in an abandoned arcade on K'Rd. It was standing there, in an empty, lifeless room. Was it waiting? It's a functional object. It was designed to be used, as most furniture is. It seemed strange, this contrast of something that was meant to be used in this useless state.

But actually, wait a moment, does it have to be used?

Should every object have a purpose?

I don't know.

BEING IN THE CITY

The grass in Albert Park, sometimes can feel supportive, allowing you to rest your body *laying down* on it, expose you to being kissed gently by the sun, caressed by the wind. Get up and walk a bit further, climb a tree - *feel* how cool it is with your cheek, feel connected to it, go ahead, go *hug* some trees, *explore* how textured the tops of the yellow bumps for the blind are and how they vibrate under your heel. Come here on a rainy night and feel how slippery it is. How shiny it is, reflecting the bright street lamps' lights and maybe even some stars. Try *jumping* on it, maybe even by chance hitting a branch of magnolia tree with your head, letting the petals, that are still left on it, fall gently on your shoulders. Pick up one of them, could you tell it apart from leather, you think, if you had your eyes shut?

If you are feeling adventurous, *slide* down the railings to the Kitchener Street, *jump* the stairs down to the Lorne street, *dipping* your fingertips into the small water pools alongside the staircase, feeling the firm smooth stone tiles under your feet. There is a escalator ahead of you, is it still a jump-able surface, you think? *Lean* onto things, what can you know about the structure of the space behind them? Is it large and hollow, or perhaps a narrow passage, where even a mouse can't fit. Try and *bite* branches of the Norfolk pine - what can you *taste*? Air pollution perhaps?

All of these, we did on the touch walks, which was immensely fun, but also at times sad and very insightful, realizing all the textures the city has, all the limited ways we encounter them, all the taboos that are usually in the way, all the social norms telling us what to touch and what rather not.

How would you like to touch your city?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In these concluding paragraphs I want to draw attention to a few important concepts that emerged during the walks.

Through the stories above and the paragraphs below I hope to illustrate how walking individually and attentively we went far beyond our subjective individual experiences, extrapolating them, expanding their significance and weaving them back into a fabric of our co-existence. Despite a widespread idea of sensory experiences being deeply subjective and highly individualized^[7], it is clear that there are certain cultural norms that shape the interpretations of such experience and play a part in determining their desirability and appropriateness in public places. There is also something uniting in experiencing a sensation, and connecting with someone over: 'oh wow, have you also heard/smelled that?' The dialogue that follows can shed light on the meanings of this sensation, the associations and memories it brings, the processes that are bringing it into existence.

ENTANGLEMENT

Through walking in attentive ways we also become aware of the entangled nature of things. The physical presence - of objects, or smells, sounds or textures - that we are able to directly experience with our senses, if taken thoughtfully, signifies a much larger and more complex assemblage of resources, processes, people and structures that they constitute. We can see this assemblage as multidimensional, extending across space and time. We can look back at what stretches behind it: take, the concrete wall that is being lifted to a construction sight, hanging on the chain of the tall crane, and considering it carefully. We may imagine the mines from where the materials to make it were extracted, the plants that once grew on the ground that was moved elsewhere to dig this mine, the human and machine force that went into extracting it, the legislation that controls and enables this, the investment that enabled it, the list can go on.

Now, look at its other dimension, that stretches in front of us, visible, tactile, olfactory and audible: this concrete wall is becoming part of a 'luxury apartments', built in the City Center, you can hear the sound of it being erected, metal clashing against metal, heavy bulks piled on top of each other, you inhale the chalky-smelling construction dust. "Why is this here?" someone wonders. When we stop by and become attentive, it becomes apparent the answer to this question lays within a complex assemblage of relations, objects, people, powers and 'nature'. Thus, what at first is seemingly an isolated building block, becomes a part of a larger assemblage that affect bodies far beyond its security fence. These affects have implications of responsibility: of asking - are the relations produced within this process fair? What bodies are and will they be affecting? It is precisely these questions of affect and responsibility that the after-walk discussion is seeking.

Something seemingly frozen in time reveals itself as process to us, as a becoming. It may be something as tangible as an age-old tree, that has witnessed generations of people pass it by. Yet, stand closely, look at its petrified roots cracking through the concrete pavement. "It is intensity in slow-motion" - someone utters during the sight-walk. This intensity is a struggle to comprehend at the human time scale, but easily imagined if you were to watch one hundred years of it on fast forward. "This is 'nature' interrupting humans" - someone else observes pondering something similar. "But when I stood there and looked longer, I thought, it is the other way around, it is humans interrupting nature." We think of time, scale and realize large processes and our place within them.

DIFFERENCE + COEXISTENCE

In the walks we become finely attuned to the differences that otherwise often blur into an mundane way of walking the street - leaving one place, going to another place. Starting from the very basic of unit of words that we are immersed to in the city - we notice the way different fonts are used to grab our attention, we notice different colors, we notice, perhaps, slightly more meaningfully the value of diverse places in the city.

We talk a lot about K'Rd, especially the bit in between Queen/Upper Queen street and Pitt Street. Walking here at any time of day or night, you are sure to encounter a diverse mix of people, hanging around or going to equally diverse places. "This is why it's so lively here" - someone in one of the walks observes "because this eclectic and somewhat chaotic diversity creates communities and attracts different people at different time of the day or night." There are cafes, shops, restaurants where one comes with a family, bookshops, opshops, music shop, a few bars/clubs, a church around the corner - all manifesting themselves in a diverse sensory experience.

"There is no generic smell of Auckland." - someone suggests. "It's the fusion of them all that makes Auckland Auckland." - someone else adds.

PRESENCE + ABSENCE + IMAGININGS

With the abundance of sensory experience in most of our walks, we were acutely aware of the occasional absence of thereof. Some of the absences were deliberately searched for, some recognized with a slight surprise. The former manifested itself in an experience of one of the sound-walkers, who after being exposed to about an hour of continuous construction sounds have chosen to explore 'peace' as her main theme. However, even in a church, where she hoped to find some quietness, the construction was still echoing.

Another kind of absence was something that has been actualized after a night smell-walk, rich with distinct aromas of restaurant foods being cooked. Someone has accurately spotted the absence of traditional Māori or Polynesian kai. Someone of a Māori background, with whom I share this observation in one of the later walks, smiles, looks outside into the distance, then back at me, lightly shrugs his shoulders: "Oh you wouldn't want us to dig the holes in the ground and smoke the whole city." I know I wouldn't want my city to be full of greasy fast foods or construction dust or car exhaust fumes. I would certainly not mind substituting those with some food steam coming from the Earth oven.

The sensory absences can reflect one's own physical or mental needs (as with quietness) and correspondingly the success or failure of some

city spaces to provide that. They can reflect the structural oppression of some cultures resulting in their absence from the city center (as with Polynesian foods).

The absence of some sensory experiences was sometimes connected to imagining them, or what could be in their place. We imagined an air conditioner's continuous hum as coming from a beehive, and picked out the representations of 'home sounds' from the busy street, substituted any detected loud sound with a waterfall rumble, imagined the past of the buildings through looking at their cracks and the conversations the sparrows were having while bathing in a puddle.

A CLOSING THOUGHT

Attention and imagination are very powerful concepts. It is not merely through reducing the speed of our interactions with the world (although that partly too) but through becoming consistently and deliberately attentive - to ourselves, to assemblages that we constantly form and reform, to the relations between other components in these assemblages - that we can start recognizing that some of them are not just or healthy ones. It also through this kind of attention we can become attuned to the other kinds of assemblages and interconnections - the balanced & fair, where lively beings at the observable dimension of these connections, or physically distant ones are treated with care and respect for life, human, or not, recognizing ecological limits. Through imagination we can turn the outcomes of being attentive into visions and eventually practices of societies that live on this planet.

NOTES

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6. Westerkamp Hildegard, 'Soundwalking', 2007, *Autumn Leaves, Sound and the Environment in Artistic Practice*, Ed. Angus Carlyle, Double Entendre, Paris
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Walking - one sense at a time is series of creative city explorations, where we focus on one specific sense per walk: smell, sound, sight, touch. During each of the walks we note the respective sensory observations, discuss their meaning and create a unique sensory map. Weaving together arts & research, each walk is ultimately concerned with engaging the walkers into broader social issues – what does a livable city smell like, what is the sound of social justice, what does pollution feel like? The walks were organized and led by an artist and cultural geographer Iryna Zamuruieva, in Auckland, New Zealand city center in the period from June to September 2018.

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