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"Walking, narrating;" a/r/tographic experiences based on the walk as a proposal for intervention in different contexts

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Abstract

The aim of the present work is to present a series of a/r/tographic experiences linked to the action of walking as an artistic, educational and research practice, at the same time with the intention of putting into practice ways of doing that favor relationship dynamics with the environment as a social and exchange space. For this, I give an account of the journey that leads me to expose the action of walking as an artistic practice, intervention proposal and educational research at the same time. In this sense, I understand the action of walking from a critical, artistic and pedagogical standpoint, and therefore political, with the intention of generating knowledge based on artistic processes, and to open that way to new paths to explore in formal and non-formal education fields. In this way, during the course of the research, very enriching intermediate spaces emerge, linking both practices in the same action, from the relational gaze and in continuous movement proposed by the a/r/tography.

Keywords: A/r/tography, community, collective artistic practice, drift.

Introduction

With this article I intend to expose a series of actions and journeys through spaces based on the action of walking as a/r/tographic experience taken, to different areas of formal and non-formal education. "A/r/ tography is an educational research methodology based on practice, in which knowing, learning and doing are not mutually exclusive, but coexisting with the sensation and movement of artistic practice" (Triggs, Irwin and O 'Donoghue, 2012: 1). For this, the work that I present starts from an artistic research that I develop from my artistic practice as a tool of inquiry. to record drawn encounters where to reflect on the ways of knowing linked to the action of walking and the walked spaces. In this way, the research intends to sketch a map of possible evocations linked to the action of walking as a proposal of intervention where artistic practice, research and education are unified from the a/r/tographic look.

From this approach I choose the action of walking as an artistic investigation that has favored the exploration and appearance of invisible spaces, devoid of experiential load to be reinterpreted, making possible the movement through them as part of a knowledge process from the physical wandering to reach inside them "exploring unprecedented routes, full of strident contradictions, dramas that sometimes make up unpublished harmonies" (Careri, 2009: 178). The explorations have led me to a series of possible approaches or evocations to the concept of walking with the intention of registering different routes that arise from my displacement. From this perspective, action does not stop, nor is it fragmented to extract the contained findings, but it can be traversed to be reinterpreted. Routes that are

transformed in time, and that continue to generate other routes, new connections. The research does not close conclusively, but finds ways that extend the idea of the walk beyond its literal (meaning) to understand it as polysemic tissue. A form of action in constant transformation from which to continue deepening from different perspectives attending to the transversality of its possibilities, walking beyond the surface.

The action of walking as a research process offers me a wide possibility to approach the process of inquiry in a multidimensional and interdisciplinary way during collective representation, awareness raising, knowledge exchange, positioning or pedagogical activism. A drift-based methodology that articulates collaborative learning processes from the action, generating dynamics based on dialogue and participation as a triggering device for actions. The environment and the action of walking, therefore, act as a pedagogical agent, since during the process new meanings are constructed based on the experiences lived, as stated by Jackeline Duarte:

The environment is derived from the interaction of the individual with a natural environment that surrounds him. It is an active conception that involves the human being and, therefore, involves pedagogical actions in which those who learn are able to reflect on their own action and that of the others, in relation to the environment (Duarte, 2003: 99).

The relational art proposed by drift as a collective cartography transforms the community into a participant in the stories found along the way to generate the possibility of social transformation. Since the displacement, there takes place the coexistence of different points of view around a situation, the

possibility of rethinking certain perspectives already established or established concepts, in the same way that it works as an activating device or pedagogical resource for the development of a methodology of action promoting a space for exchange and exploration of the territory that surrounds us, by creating as many lines of action as there are views on the subject. To investigate through the artistic practice associated with walking as an aesthetic practice of knowledge, favors both in the phase of walking and in the subsequent reflection the intercrossing of interdisciplinary paths that helped me to compose the discourse that generated the research.

"The path is made by walking." The action of walking as a collective cultural practice

The following section revolves around several experiences that lead me to propose art as a collective cultural practice from the relationship between actions that have been happening throughout the research "Walking ... the action of walking as artistic research from a a/r/tographic perspective" (picture 1). An investigation based on the action of walking as an artistic practice of inquiry because of the possibility it offers me to create new discourses, connections and intuitions from my perspective as an artist, teacher and researcher at the same time, favoring the creation of a map of actions that enrich the creative process and the construction of new narratives, a path that I trace in the same action of walking.

Picture 1. Photo-essay organized from a picture of Moreno Montoro, M.I (left), and a visual quote fragment. (Ferrer, 2002)





The form or structure of the research follows the phases contained in the drift, from the approach to the way in which it has been gestating, starting from the body as a center of experimentation and the relationship with the environment. The first explorations arise from of a series of walks through different spaces without a

destination but from the flow of a place felt as strange at the same time as the quotidian, allowing me to enter it from experimentation, chance, play or intermedia. As if it were the exercises proposed by Joseph Beuys, Wolf Vostell, Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman, in that desire to turn the ride into an action that is configuring new connections, tracing again and again the lines that hide under our feet, building from inside the corners of an imaginary space based on our experience of the place. In this sense, following the drift structure I begin to wander as a form of exploration like Francis Allys or Hamish Fulton in their long walks, following a path marked by the unexpected, chance, the intuitive, the intermediate, the ludic, the experimental, the presence of time, in that union between art and life ... etc.; premises that author Ken Friedman uses to define the artistic movement of fluxus, and which artists such as Josep Beuys, Nan June Pak or Allan Kaprow defended in their artistic practices as a way of life. From this perspective, I am interested in the idea of walking as a daily action linked to my life experience, to the playful act that sometimes appears randomly, not other times, but without direction ... without knowing where my steps will lead, but followed by the intuition emerged from the same experimentation during the path through the body as a center of perception.

Throughout the investigation, I am giving new meaning to the space I pass from experience and intuition, weaving a map of actions that leads me to propose the place social space. I choose the action of Esther Ferrer, The path is made by walking (picture 1), to emphasize the relationship that is established between the action and the different contexts where it participates, exploring other ways of telling, in that attempt to link what is said with the way it is said, through the testing of forms, like the traces that the inhabitants leave when they move, meet and relate, in the same way that Nicolas Borriaud invites us to the possibility of a relational art:

"An art that would take as a theoretical horizon the sphere of human interactions and their social context, rather than the affirmation of an autonomous and private symbolic space, it accounts for a radical change in the aesthetic, cultural and political objectives put into play by the modern art" (Bourriaud, 2006: 13).

Therefore, in that journey I am building a path from my relationship with the other, or as Gergen argues:

A useful way of putting things, that is, that an actor never reaches the meaning, except through the complementary actions of the other. Anything that is said or written has no intrinsic meaning; it does not carry a univocal message in social constructionism and pedagogical practice in itself. Nor is the meaning of a series of words or actions determined solely by the receiver (listener or reader). Rather, the actions of an individual (both linguistic and the others) operate as indicators of possible relational sequences; provoke certain lines of action, as opposed to others. (Gergen, 2007: 219).

In this way, the discourse is woven in that flow through lives that converge in mine, in that sense, we not only count our lives as stories, there is also a meaning in which our relationships with others are lived in a narrative (Gergen, 2007) at the same time that, as Hernández proposes, when we articulate a path from the transit through those life stories, where research does not fix the narrative of the experience narrated as an end in itself, but rather it is the narrative process itself a way of knowing itself, from decision making to how to articulate the narrative, the narrative strategies deployed and the function they perform in each case, leaving traces of the way of knowing that propitiates writing in the narrative research (Hernández, 2014). Or as Bourrieaud explains, from the relational sense of artistic practice,

It seems possible to account for the specificity of current art thanks to the notion of the production of relationships outside the field of art (opposing them to internal relations, which provide it with its socioeconomic base): they are the relations between individuals and groups, between the artist and the world, and consequently, the relations between "the one who looks" and the world (Borrieaud, 2006: 29).

Thus, the action is transformed into a resource through which an experience is created or recreated, in which the body is inserted in its relationship with others. Therefore, the present work is approached from the artistic practice, understood as collective cultural practice, from the relational in the construction of meaning, an idea that the *fluxus* movement defends, and contemporary artists through their practice where the social component is inserted:

The common place according to which art involves expanding the idea of artistic practice to include also the social conditions (relational, organizational, institutional, economic, etc.) that are a condition of their existence, since they form an inextricable part of what we identify as art, in the same way that the iceberg is the whole mass of ice that composes it, and not only its visible apex (Heinich 2003: 54).

In this sense, when talking about artistic practices as cultural practices and connecting them with the pedagogical and the investigative, we must do it, as Sánchez de Serdio (2014) points out, situating us within the framework of a cultural and collective pedagogy as a form of collaborative research. According to Serdio, this means to distance oneself from the most usual disciplinary and psychological approaches in the theories of education and learning, to align with the more political tendencies of cultural studies and pedagogies, so the pedagogical subject is not understood as an individual in which certain cognitive processes are encouraged, but it is essentially social and is situated in cultural processes that exceed the conventional contexts of education (Sánchez de Serdio, 2014).

Alternative routes and road metaphors

The action of walking as a creative process responds to the form of drift as the backbone of the research and method of inquiry, in which the shared experiences in that journey are fundamental as the thread of the discourse (picture 2).

Picture 2. Visual metaphors from photographs "Narratives of the unexpected" and "walking" of the participating students, 2016









In this way, I propose the walk as a daily action or life experience, at the same time as an artistic practice, as Dewey proposes in recovering the continuity between artistic practice as a life experience, (...) a task is imposed for whom intends to write on the philosophy of the fine arts. This task consists of restoring the continuity between the refined and intense forms of experience that are the works of art, and the events, facts and daily sufferings, which are universally recognized as constitutive of the experience (Dewey, 2008). On the other hand, I understand artistic practice as an educational practice, as a methodology that favors learning experiences. Dewey argues that knowledge derives from experience, and therefore from artistic practices:

The idea of increasing understanding, of deepening the intelligibility of the objects of nature and man, resulting from the aesthetic experience, has led philosophers to treat art as a mode of knowledge, and it has induced artists, especially to poets, to consider art as a way of revealing the inner nature of things, which cannot be obtained in any other way. It has led to treat art as a mode of knowledge, not only superior to that of ordinary life, but that of science itself. (Dewey, 2008: 325).

From this perspective, the research is based on the development of a methodology built from artistic practice as part of the creative process, as a research and educational action, finding a way to proceed where both practices occur at the same time. It leads me to the construction of a discourse that leads me to re-signify the spaces I experience, reflecting on the relationships that are established by linking paths that emerge from the interstitial view proposed by the a/r/ tography. Experiences that were derived in a series of interventions as a process open to collective creation, inviting reflection on new ways of doing that take into account the gaze of each subject, showing what would otherwise be invisible. A reflexive work on what we want to show and how we want to tell it, in the form of multisensory cartographies, as proposed by López-Peláez as a cognitive research method:

Multisensory cartography is presented in this way as a symbolic map made in different supports and in which, therefore, languages that are encoded in a different way interact. In addition to the presence of the sound, the iconic and the textual play a fundamental role in the architecture of the city or more unusual aspects, such as the movement or the gesture of the walker when wandering. It is, therefore, an intermediate artefact of iconic, textual, gestural and sound nature, in which an appropriation of space takes place through a self-referential narrative (López-Peláez Casellas, M.P, 2016: 109).

Considering the action of walking as a collective cultural practice in the relational construction of the story, I am weaving a path from the transit through the life stories that are happening in that walk through different spaces, crossed by the stories in the continuous exchange of experiences, such as the collective action of walking of Fernanda, Clara and Viviana, Narratives of the unexpected, which led me to rethink the process of building a path in the classroom, from performativity as a form of knowledge. "Performing an intermediate artistic practice in the university classroom gave us the possibility to connect with our certainties and our fears. It was enriching from the moment of deciding what to tell about our paths, finding some common points -still unclear- from where to begin our artistic experience. At first, the control of the story gave us the illusion of security to make a video, submerging our texts and drawings in the water, we achieved an appropriate result, but it was at the moment of concluding our activity, when we realized that it was the material, the wet paper, the one that took center stage over our body, and we understood that this had been the prelude to true intermediate practice, the material clung to our hands, followed our forms, demanded certain movements. The action was brief, it was curious to note that just by looking at us, we managed to attend to these subtleties." Fernanda Georgiadis, Clara Monteiro and Viviana Pérez". (Picture 2)

In this way, starting from the drift as a creative process, hybrid, of experimentation, I propose the action of walking as an intermediate artistic practice based on the relational not only among the media, but also between the different agents that intervene and aspects of the social activity that are affected by this action. From intermediate practices that emerged from the road, I reflected on the metaphor of the rhizome as the creation of intermediate spaces of encounter, inquiry, subversion or action; the situation of teaching/learning is situated as a collaborative art form, as a social democratic process that involves those who participate, enables them to position themselves in a critical way in the face of what they are learning, living (Torres De E a, 2014). In this sense, the proposal was configured according to collective practices following a non-linear structure, according to the experiences of each subject and their way of narrating it, rhizomatic experiences that follow the concept already addressed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "a descriptive or epistemological model in which the organization of the elements does not follow lines of hierarchical subordination -with a base or root giving rise to multiple branches, according to the well-known model of the Porfirio's tree-, but any element can affect or affect any other" (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 13), with the intention of narrating the experience they have lived since their walk home, to relate a process that is still open to crossing with other routes, from the relational sense proposed by the rhizome.

Thus, as the intermediate path presented by Ana Rama Guerrero, Miriam Castro Luque and Maria del Campo through the sound installation walking, which invited us to explore the space through a non-linear succession of everyday objects that reconstructed the space from the confluence of stories on the way home, and that led me to think about the space thought from the ordinary. "In the first place, an activity was carried out whose purpose was to collect an experience, capture it and collect possible words, pictures, videos, audios, and significant objects for each one of us. This experience was based on the "way" that we made; it was the go and return of a quotidian day, from home to the university. A usual route with no relevant meaning, only functional, which we had to observe with all our senses. Once all the elements that we considered were collected, it was made a sharing of this experience and it began to develop the proposal to "take it to another place" through the intermediate artistic practice, a practical creation in which different arts and/or disciplines converge and relate." Ana Rama Guerrero, Miriam Castro Luque and María del Campo. (Picture2)

Weaving networks: The collective walk as a relational practice

The a/r/tographic experience that I relate below arises with the intention of reflecting on the territory and the landscape from the tools and strategies of contemporary art, as an invitation to investigate about the immediate environment, relating it to the experience of each subject, memory, and social and cultural fabric; from the involvement of all agents in the process in a collaborative way. The proposal is based on previous experiences, which have led me to practice as a relational action. A journey that begins in a conversation with a group of women about their memories associated with the neighborhood, and that leads me to tell the story of survival through meetings with the association of neighbors to which they belong, a place where they meet with the intention of weaving their stories between stitches of time. I set out to explore in the process itself, how it could be told, how to build it from collective practices and to be shared. At that time, I was interested in the idea of building other narrative or performing forms that would make visible a story. From that experience arises the idea of collective walk as a form of story from everyday actions that each one expresses from their personal experience, or from their local context. We propose the walk as an open process of action and reflection, from the action of reconstruction of the place starting from the imaginary, from the shared experience and the register that is configuring new narratives that constitute an essential part of the process. (Picture 3)

Picture 3. *Independent picture of the participant community*, 2016. Source: Jeremías.



We started a collective walk as a community artistic practice from understanding the context in which we are inserted from the relational sense (picture 4). The walk was considered as an approach to the social context of the neighborhood from the encounter with neighbors of the place, with the community, with the purpose of making a mapping based on the idea of neighborhood shared by its inhabitants, places, memories, to develop a proposal from the initiatives and resources of the place. From the mapping came possibilities of doing; finally, it was decided to make an affective drift. From the concept "affections," we are interested in the potential of multiple readings with the participating students, tours through spaces that are significant for their neighbors. We understand affective drift as a way of wandering through space from the intangible, the unspoken and not very visible. In the action, there is no definite objective but to walk as an exploration of the place, understanding the walk as a shared and collective experience when linking us to those who participate in them as inhabitants of the place, crossed by the experiences of those who inhabit it.

The collective tour was developed around processes in collaborative learning focused on the construction of a joint discourse around the idea of walking as an artistic practice and shared knowledge exchange around the walk through the neighborhood. From this position, a research was built from the social fabric created among the participants of the action; therefore, it would not make sense to consider research as an individual artistic practice. The relational, transitive qualities will create networks, links between subjects and spaces; thus, the pedagogical sense is constructed from the relational or from the collaboration of the agents that intervene in the process, in thinking of others as generators of knowledge, turning the investigation in a collective and social process. From the exchange of experiences like that of María Del Campo: "We are ready to start the journey after having some coffee and cookies prepared by women of the neighborhood; everyone is excited to receive us and we are expectant with what awaits us during the day. We start (walking) along a steep unpaved road, listening to the elders tell their stories of when they were young, and the young laugh and tell their own of that special place for all of them. I always have a very good connection with the children, so I become inseparable from my namesake, María, I speak with her about the school, the neighborhood, the neighbors... what a perspective so different from another girl from any other neighborhood, I realize that this neighborhood is different from the ones I know, life is on the street, hospitality, kindness, gratitude, singing, music, food, today we have shared everything, we have even enjoyed learning to sew with older women, the cross stitch and the chain. We patch our pieces of cloth to keep the memory of this day. Children, adults, students, neighbors; the fat, skinny, high and short ones have shared the same day in the same place; what a great coincidence." María Del Campo.

Picture 4. Independent picture of the participant community, 2016. Source: Moreno Montoro, M.I.



The research led me to the exploration of new places from the relational sense, to the encounter with the inhabitants of the place; and from there, to begin a journey in which inquire about what is happening from the transit and movement by linking the different experiences that are happening. People participate in the action while the tour takes place in different places. These encounters lead me to reflect on the community with the intention of being part of shared processes, in that doing from collaborative work, understanding the collaborative as a negotiation process, dialogical where they incorporate and share questions about methodologies and work ideas, with the intention of integrating different views around an action. Collaborative actions, therefore, seek to generate other ways of doing, where to learn with and from the exchange of experiences with the community. In this sense, I am interested in the idea of collaborative work with collectives as a form of cultural production with the intention of putting value on community practices.

On the other hand, sharing the collective walk made me reflect on the meanings of walking from each experience: for Clara, she acquired a way of transforming, weaving, doing in the everyday, of thinking about distance: "In recent months, walking has been a constant action for me. Since I left my country, this verb has crossed my imagination, connecting with the new geographies that I have drawn, I have felt the intrinsic and strong need to start, search and transform the space in harvest territory. For example, being outside of my city has provided the pleasure to discover other ways to feel at home. When I arrived in Alcaudete, I found people, spaces, objects and customs that could be mine too. The entire day, I was led to experience the history, the flavors, the landscape and, mainly, the human character of the city. Recognizing in the canticle of the elderly their trajectory of life; or in neighborhood meetings -people sitting in the square-, a unique way of relating to the other; it is also a new way to represent myself and understand my own internal cartography." Clara Monteiro.

Picture 5. Photo-essay from two pictures of the participant community, 2016. Source: Jeremías.





The action begins in the life stories of their inhabitants, their desires and needs, we propose the walk as a way to re-signify the space, to investigate and identify about how experiences and knowledge are transformed and emerge from the exchange with their inhabitants. From the walk, experiences are narrated, affinity networks that are interwoven from the relationship with the community, new ways of doing and understanding culture as a social interaction. Strolling with others became both a way of investigating what happens, and what happens to us in those spaces we travel, what other possibilities to do have been given or can be given, as a means of tracing new trajectories collectively from a shared process. We rescue life stories that tend to re-signify the space we travel, from memories of processes based on the experiences of each walker. Questions about the place, about everything that we are investigating or are finding, forming a map of our experience that we are narrating in that doing from the same path. From where we look at it and how we trace it from the stories that intersect and connect with ours. A network of construction of the collective imagination, of how we feel; how we think about the city makes us establish a certain bond with it and with those who inhabit it. That is why it is so important to share what is being researched, tracked, found and developed during the organization of a trip, experiences, affections and knowledge, to collectively plot the place we have and what we want.

From the collective walk, daily stories of cultural resistance were generated, defined as an open process, which is built over time and allows us to experiment from the interest of investigating, from artistic action, different forms of transits between experiences and lives. The walk as a way to visualize small daily stories of resistance, of relationship with the environment as a social space, with different narrative forms to build collective memory based on the recording of stories, of fostering encounters, interactions and experiences. Taking as an essential aspect the effects, as an engine of actions, of the experiential and the emotional as a starting point and motor of resistance.

Conclusions from the shared process

The experience has allowed us to establish a series of positions based on forms of social interaction from the relational premise proposed by the action of walking, rethinking roles in the educational sphere, adopting the sense of collaborative practices as an exchange of knowledge from the collective creation and as a transmitter of knowledge. (Picture 6)

Picture 6. Independent picture of the participant community, 2016. Source: Fernanda Georgiadis.



The action of walking as a/r/tographic experience has favored social interaction and the appearance of incidental interconnections in the process of construction of individual and collective knowledge during the shared process; each group or each participant, both in the walking phase and in the subsequent reflection, has favored the interweaving of interdisciplinary paths that helped to compose the discourse.

Through collective walk, we generate records and memory files of the inhabitants of the place, which have shaped the memory from the shared process, from the transmission of such stories of the protagonists of stories of resistance in their local contexts. This shared memory is both a material to be reinterpreted from different perspectives, as narrative construction of experiences, or starting point of new community practices, to enable processes or flows to generate new experiences.

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