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Landscape metropolis #2

capturing particularities in
the metropolitan landscape

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Capturing particularities in the metropolitan landscape

"It seems a commonplace that almost everyone is born with the need for identification with his surroundings and a relationship to them – with the need to be in a recognizable place. So sense of place is not a fine art extra, it is something we cannot afford to do without."––– Jan Nairn, 1965

Since its first issue, SPOOL has used the term 'landscape metropolis' to address urban formations beyond the traditional city that – despite their increasing ubiquity - still lack in-depth attention from the perspective of aesthetic appreciation, designerly concepts of development, guidelines for planning and governance, and design theoretical apprehension. The prefix 'landscape' is used to describe attention to these topics through the lens of landscape architecture, and offers, we feel, some novel potentials: in considering the metropolis as a cultural phenomenon that is constructed mentally as well as physically and socially; which relies on human as well as on natural driving forces; and which contains, somewhere in the cracks of the mosaic, in the 'in-between', places with distinguishable qualities – particular places.

In an era of globalization, landscape architects and urban designers have learnt to think big in the landscape metropolis – in the large scale and with far-reaching visions. Yet this bigness is still largely the domain of international players, and its effects do not necessarily foster the quality of urban spaces in the landscape metropolis. And this is also the moment we observe tendencies to think small again: design interventions on the neighbourhood level, transformations of unused spaces through low-cost, bottom-up initiatives, centred on awareness-raising and community building and which shape space temporarily. In this new playing field, designers work more and more with that which exists, taking everything into consideration, including those scattered pieces of the metropolitan tissue that defy definition. If we look at them through the lens of landscape architecture, can we apprehend their qualities beyond the static lens of the architectural object, by reading them as dynamic landscape architectural forms? What is the nature of such places and what is the vocabulary to describe them? The papers in this issue provide tools to sharpen our view for the particular, to identify the places of the landscape metropolis in their structural, material, dynamic, practical, atmospheric, mnemonic and discursive identities. They tentatively propose a new terminology for places eluding conceptual description, using works and words for something we still hardly have a name for.

In the two issues of SPOOL's volume 3, designerly and discursive work on particular places of the landscape metropolis is explored much like a gold digger might do – by taking a closer look, spotting those grains that merit attention amongst the vast ore body that is the metropolitan territory. Once found, these grains evoke all kinds of questions: How to grasp the particularities of places—their aesthetic, social, atmospheric, relational, and dynamic qualities, which are always materialized in a physical situation that has a particular form, and makes up part of a bigger picture? How to enhance identified particularities in a designerly way? How to theorize understandings of place for the landscape metropolis? How to replace tacitly accepted ideas of beauty when identifying a diversity of beauties in places so far overlooked?

The papers of these two issues on particular places do not provide a grand narrative. The authors published here accept the complexity of our take on the landscape metropolis, and put forward scattered narratives that emerge from the very interstices of the grand narratives, and of the many practices of research in and

for the landscape metropolis. Authors have sent us proposals for theorizing and methodizing approaches to place and landscape metropolitan qualities, which we have grouped in the first issue under the title 'Capturing Particularities in the Landscape Metropolis'. Other submissions reflect on design work, sometimes imagined, sometimes realized, and sometimes also carried out by or in collaboration with the authors. This group of papers is collected in the second issue, entitled 'Practicing Design for Particular Places'.

Practicing in the landscape metropolis today means one hops from bike to train to car and creates links between fragments of the landscape metropolis, in ever changing moves. This is what we observe our authors doing through their research. To capture particularities, they move from on-site experience to off-site representation (Farsø and Henriksson), from physical fieldwork to digitally expanded mapping (Hemmersam and Morrison), from theorizing atmosphere to experimenting with cartography (Spanou), from walking to knowing (Schultz), from appreciating the urban to defining its quietness (Nielsen), from theories of frame to design as framing (Alexandrescu). To suggest and reflect practices of design for particular places, our authors examine narrative approaches (Havik and van Haeren), dynamic readings (Prezelj), durational art strategies (Tihanyi), participatory practices (Siarheyeva), DIY aesthetics (Dahl), and the staging of atmospheric encounters (Labadini).

Research about particular places can hardly be imagined without reference to such places, and unsurprisingly, all our authors start to develop their thoughts from a specific location, which offers us a picture of its own right of what the 'landscape metropolis' might include: the Öresund region across Denmark and Sweden (Farsø and Henriksson), a couple of Arctic cities in Norway, Russia and Canada (Hemmersam and Morrison), the Spanish region of Catalonia (Spanou), the German city of Freiburg (Schultz), newly developed districts in Amsterdam and Copenhagen (Nielsen), the transformed centre of Bukarest (Alexandrescu), urban fringes in the Netherlands (Havik and van Haeren), a contaminated site in the outskirts of Paris (Prezelj), a central district of Budapest (Tihanyi), harbour sites in Marseille (Siarheyeva) and Gothenburg (Dahl), a seafront in the Norwegian city of Brattøra (Labadini).

Practitioners of the landscape metropolis shift attention from people on the sidewalk to a smartphone message to a shower from a sudden cloud. This is how our authors unfold their thinking about particular places, and that is how we invite our readers to practice these two issues of SPOOL – with attention to the particular, while establishing links between one particularity and another, and to the overarching whole. Place is specific, 'somewhere'. Specific places can make connections between what is local and particular and what is regional and worldwide, as the Canadian geographer Edward Relph wrote in his study on the concept of place entitled Place and Placelessness (2009). He described place as the intimate and specific basis for how each of us connects with the world, with the potential to serve as a pragmatic foundation for addressing profound local and global challenges that are emerging in the present – be it megacity growth, climate change or economic disparity. Rethinking the particular, we argue, is urgently needed to bring affect back into our design and research endeavours. Or, as American scholar Elizabeth Meyer suggested on a recent conference in Malmö, 'what if landscape design techniques (…) were recalibrated so that open-endedness included the uncertain affective capacities and propensies of human emotional interactions with designed landscapes that evoked awe? In doing so, might they challenge our sense of the public, and in doing so, suggest new modes of being in the world?'

Saskia de Wit and Lisa Diedrich

Defined by deviations

the Traveling Transect as a bodily research approach to appropriate and disseminate places

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Abstract

Based on a Travelling Transect approach, this paper explores how ample interpretations and opportunities for new thoughts about sites are developed, especially when these sites are explored along a combined material and immaterial predefined linear path that is distorted, challenged and redefined by bodily encounters and sensations on site. By using the Travelling Transect as an approach to do research and develop new understandings of sites, possible overlooked qualities manifest themselves in a series of registrations collected or inspired by encounters on site. Illustrated through a design research study around the Öresund strait, researchers exemplify how data becomes unlocked and re-interpreted through the approach. In short, the aesthetic values identified in a map, in a geometry or a static composition are displaced by the approach to values connected to an experience of site's audio or material surroundings, time-space relations and on-site reflections and sensations connected to movement.

Keywords

landscape architecture; design research; travelling transect; Humboldtian science; multimedia methods

Point of departure

This paper is concerned with the bodily research approach of transect travelling – of identifying, noticing, discovering, and formulating particularities and relations found on a site, which otherwise might go unobserved. By doing so we wish to enhance the understanding and formulation of particular place qualities experienced on a site within the larger landscape metropolis. The questions driving the research have been: 1) how does a Travelling Transect approach unfold knowledge on sites through its representation and; 2) how can such a bodily-focused on-site approach inform a new understanding of various co-existing sites, encountered in the metropolitan landscapes, as being places with equal potential for valuable experiences?

FIGURE 1 Alexander von Humboldt's tableau physique Naturgemälde depicting the volcano Chimborazo (Realized by Aimé Bonpland) in Alexander von Humboldt, Ideen zu einer Geographie der Planzen nebst einem Naturgemälde der Tropenländer, 1807.

Inspired by the 19th century German explorer and scholar Alexander von Humboldt, we perceive an empirical research as an exploratory excursion along physical itineraries that are subject to deviation—because of shifting mental itineraries (Ette, 2012, 2009). We position ourselves with thinkers and practitioners by believing that sites can be apprehended through all our senses, not only the visual. Places and sites are not only linear, object-like entities; they are complex, sensorial, ever-changing, cyclic surroundings, defined by a sensing bodily subject whose experiences might displace or challenge pre-conceptions, as the experiences prompt deviations from previously given paths, maps or images—of a site, of an architecture or of a region (Berleant, 1992; Malnar & Vodvarka, 2004; Foxley, 2010; Vogt Bornhauser, & Kissling, 2014). Furthermore, we draw upon thinkers such as Bernard Lassus (1998) who, with his term inventive analysis, claims that not only is it possible to apprehend a site through all our senses, it is a necessity given the vast complexity of our environments. A quick and eager visit to a site is not, he claims, enough to grasp its scales, aesthetic values, stories and history. Rather, he stresses the need for, perhaps, a more patient series of visits, taken almost to

the brink of boredom, where the researcher is not so much an observer but is instead, for a moment, allowed to 'live a few moments by and with it in its shade, and lights, to read and chat there' (Lassus, 1998, p.57-58).

Being part of a landscape design research team at SLU Alnarp—focused on 'site specificity' and led by Lisa Diedrich and Gini Lee [1] —we are interested in how planners and designers tend to analyse and read their sites of intervention: What is noticed, understood and taken into account, and what is disregarded or even left unnoticed? Could the unnoticed inform a better understanding of sites and reveal new aesthetic values? Here, Diedrich and Lee's Travelling Transect approach aims to translate Humboldt's historical approach into a contemporary research approach for designers and other similar professions. Additionally, we find Humboldt's Tableau Physique, a plausible deliverable of a Travelling Transect research approach, as it offers itself as a medium for a transect(ion) representation. By adopting and allowing ourselves to be inspired by our professors' emerging research on transect travelling—as a means of formulating and creating knowledge when encountering sites—we have explored the potential of the travelling transect as an approach to appropriate the Öresund region (the growing metropolitan landscape formed by Copenhagen, Malmö and smaller Danish and Swedish cities around the Öresund strait, a water body). A summer research course in August 2015 at SLU Alnarp, Malmö, for MSc and PhD students in landscape architecture, was our test bed for applying the Travelling Transect as a bodily research approach. In this context, the Tableau Physique became a window to the potential result of what such an approach might create and formulate with the knowledge of a place gained from being on site or rather, bodily, (with)in site.

Because deviation, the sudden change of one's itinerary, is one main knowledge creator in transect travelling approach, this paper itself uses it as part of its disposition and format. As researchers, we are reporting and reflecting on findings from a Travelling Transect test studio, but, on the other hand, we are also writing this paper as an expression of a travelling transect in itself. The disposition reflects the development of the research and the often non-linear way to new knowledge. Like the transect, it had an intended disposition (a preliminary itinerary) but the paper was also left open to sudden change or to adapt to the unexpected. That which prompts deviation and unforeseen changes, including the meanderings of writing, might also unfold new knowledge.

The point we want to make is that although field research is often considered to be only costly and resource-intensive, it may also provide the benefit of leading to new and unexpected knowledge. By focusing on the particular, as experienced in the field, researchers overcome a possible neglect of latent economic, ecological or cultural potentials embedded in that which is already 'in place' (Diedrich, Lee & Braae, 2014). A site-specific representation can be relevant and contemporaneous to the design research disciplines, especially when it transfers knowledge of sites into diagrams and new architectural form. In an interrelated world, a mobile scientific enquiry can help generate appropriate knowledge for the understanding of possible hidden aesthetic values in complex metropolitan landscapes. Within a bigger design research perspective, in which we refer to Danish landscape architectural scholars Malene Hauxner (2002) and Ellen Braae (2015), we address how something valuable can be found and understood as 'found' in the existing, and how an unexpected encounter can inform and inspire our thinking about design. Could we experience something aesthetically new with a better awareness of the existing? Could we review our sensorial findings of values of place through a new means of combined representation and dissemination?
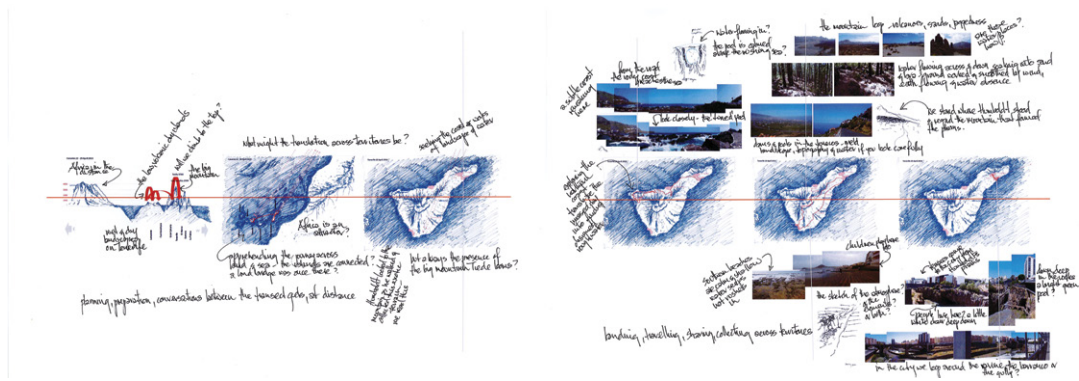
FIGURE 2 Cartographic diary of a travelling transect across the Canarian archipelago (collage by Lisa Diedrich and Gini Lee, published in: Diedrich, Lee and Braae, 2014).

Exploring the Travelling Transect as a field research approach

Through a contemporary reinterpretation of Humboldt's research method and his alternative site research representation, as expressed in his Tableau Physique, we wish to appropriate sites much more intensely, focusing on the body and the particular, individual sensorial experience. Diedrich and Lee position their Travelling Transect research between architects such as Alexandre Chemetoff, with his refusal to transfer his on-site findings and experiences to other media, and architects like Anaradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha, who use their on-site experiences to create artful mappings and complex representations that are displaced from site (Diedrich, Lee & Braae 2014).

Inspired by Humboldt's work, Diedrich and Lee have developed an ongoing approach of Transect Travelling, which adopts his scientific attitude in the acknowledgment of the particular. Humboldt proposed that knowledge would arise from the researcher's direct contact with his or her object of study, and from relating the insight to other facts and thoughts across all possible fields of knowledge. This was an empirical, experience-based, and relational alternative to the rationalist reflection about an object of study of his time, and, perhaps, to the more distant data-based desktop or Google maps 'site analysis' of today. Diedrich and Lee have explored his interest, or approach, of capturing material, immaterial or dynamic site qualities through fieldwork, as well as his methods for interpreting and communicating these qualities with different artistic means and through various media. Diedrich and Lee have researched to articulate the epistemological foundation and the methodological relevance of conducting a fieldwork study along the lines of Humboldt, due to the specific knowledge generated through a site study approach similar to his. In a wider perspective, their research reflects a belief that the interpretation of site-based knowledge can support a re-appropriation of site values, and that a more in-depth site approach can assist in discovering and articulating overlooked qualities of the site. Eventually, with such an approach at hand, researchers and architects can better communicate values of particular sites to audiences who are entitled to decide upon and steer urban development within the landscapes of the metropolis (i.e. authorities, the wider public, clients and various stakeholders). Humboldt used a particular artistic format to synthesise, interrelate and communicate his fieldwork findings to his followers, namely the Tableau Physique (Humboldt, 1810-13, Humboldt, 1847).
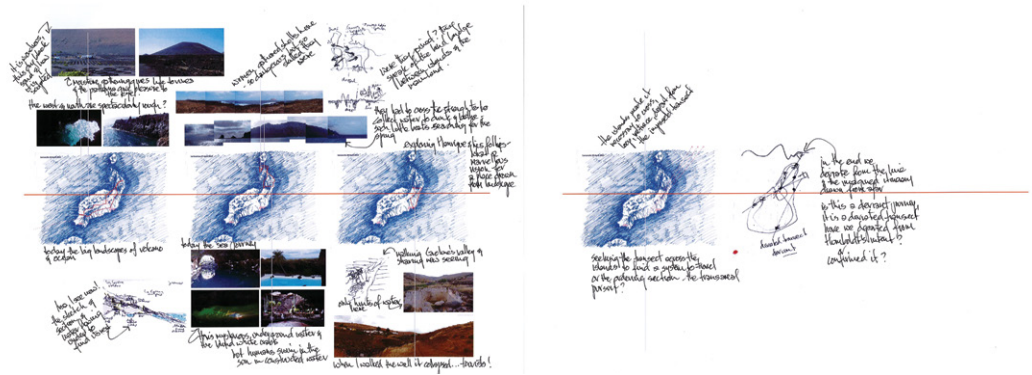
The most famous example is his annotated, coloured and data complemented cross-section of the Chimborazo volcano in the Southern American continent (Fig. 1), which is part of the research publications of his early 19th century voyage to the Americas, at the time freshly discovered. In relation to Diedrich and Lee's research, the Tableau Physique can be viewed as one possible conceptual answer to what the outcome of a Travelling Transect might be.

We presented the Tableau Physique to the participants as both as a reference image and a potential output format for the research and the travelling transect approach. We found it held both synthetic and relational potential as a reference, but we also showed it with the intent of inspiring a contemporary version or image of the Öresund as a tableau physique. We wished to inspire the researcher to convey the situatedness of a site with respect to its larger context, integrating visual information as well as the textual and numerical, and intertwining geographical insight about vegetation, topography and climate with the captured sensual properties of a place. We hoped to inspire more qualitative explorations beyond landscape data or landscape character mapping traditions, or indeed landscape research as was quantitatively manifested by Ian McHarg (1969) or by GIS and Geodesign. We find that the travelling transect translates existing site qualities convincingly to a given audience, and by so doing lays the foundation for a more site-appreciative design approach and project (Henriksson, 2015).

FIGURE 3 Rocksect exhibition item by Gini Lee and Lisa Diedrich at Nordes Nordic Design Research Conference 2015, Konstfack Stockholm (Photograph by Lisa Diedrich, 2015).
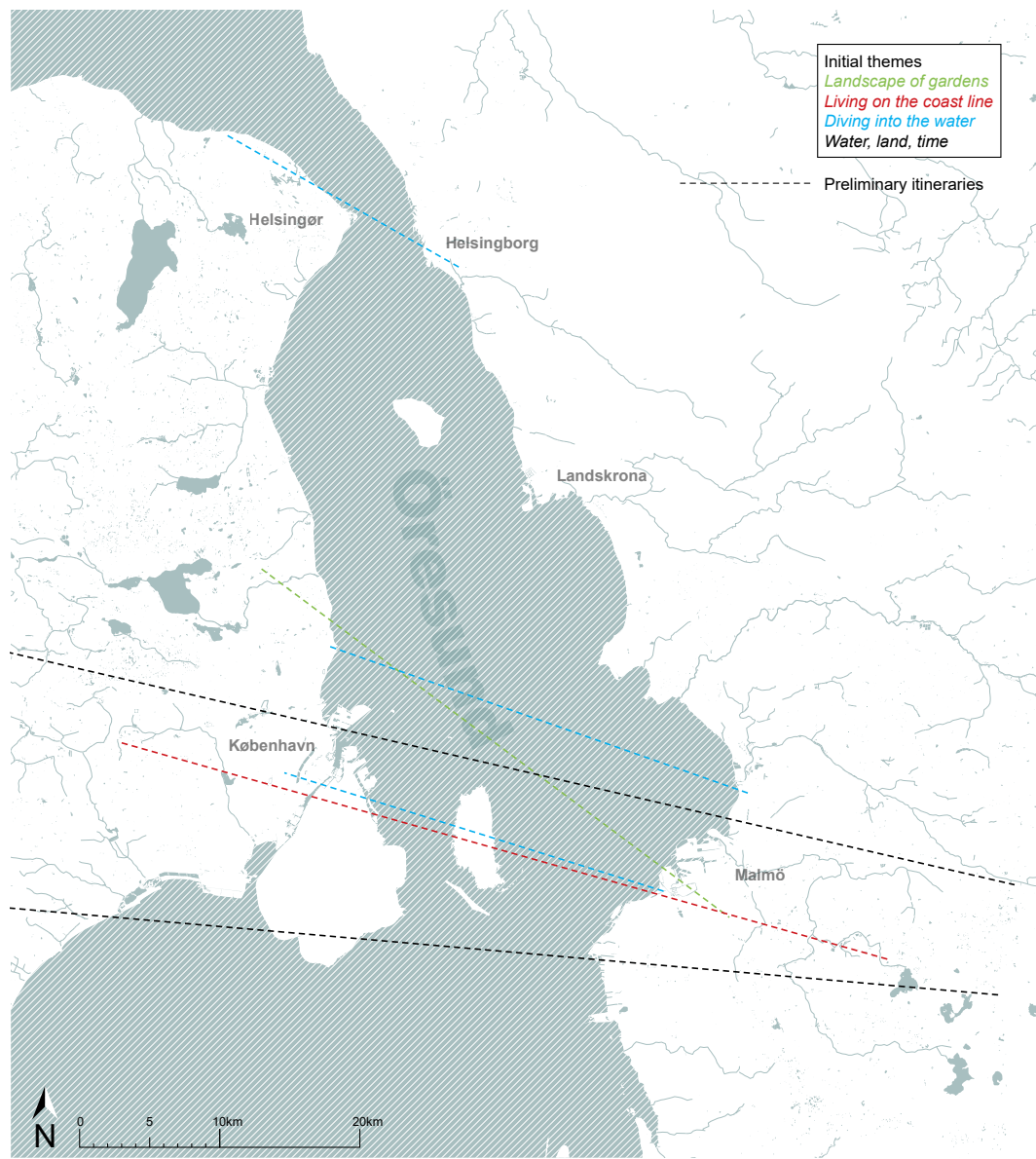
FIGURE 4 Map of proposed transect itineraries for the Öresundsect course at SLU Alnarp (Map by Alexander Henriksson, 2015).

In their Travelling Transect research practice, Diedrich and Lee explore water landscapes through immersive and immediate explorations on the move, while seeking to bring knowledge from site to elsewhere, just as land artist Robert Smithson produced his 'non-sites' to translate 'on-site' experiences (Diedrich et al., 2014). Diedrich and Lee have applied artistic media to express the ephemeral qualities of these researched landscapes as they were found. Their Canary-sect fieldwork across the urbanising Canarian archipelago was communicated through a two dimensional collage-type 'cartographic diary' (Fig. 2). Later their Rock-sect study of indigenous and engineered rock pools in Australia became a three-dimensional multimedia exhibition item (Fig. 3), including a video (doi:10.7480/spool.2016.1.1356.g1483).

With this knowledge in mind, and in the context of a studio course, we tested the capabilities of the Travelling Transect approach with a team of young landscape architects and researchers. Through literature studies and seminar days, the research participants were acquainted with site theories, Humboldtian science and the travelling transect approach as developed by Diedrich and Lee. In multiple moves, both as groups and individually, the researchers travelled the Öresund region, under themes and abstract transect itineraries set out by us (Fig. 4).
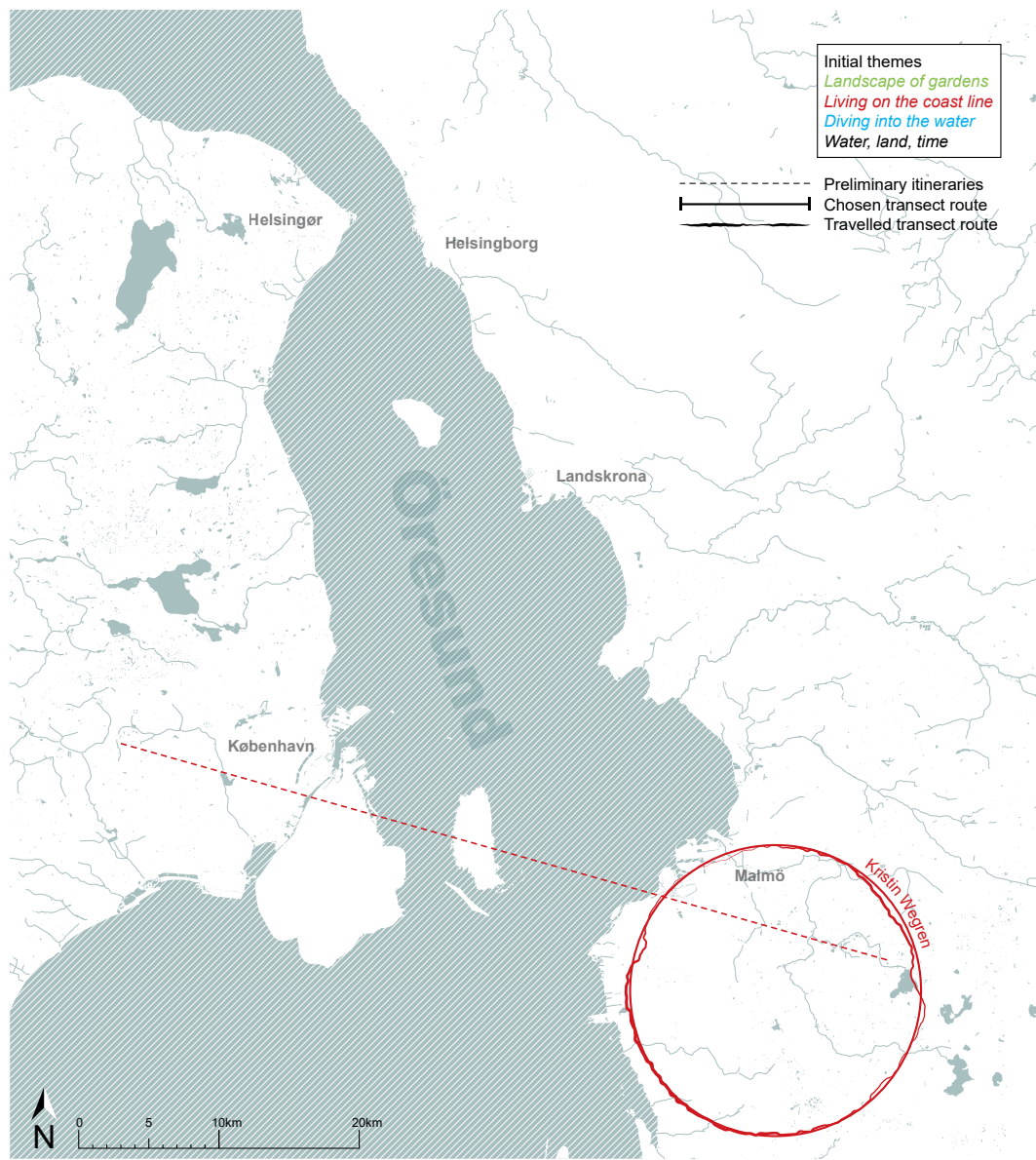
FIGURE 5 Map of individual transect concept and of deviated itinerary for the theme 'Living on the coastline' by Kristin Wegren, Öresundsect course (Map by Alexander Henriksson, 2015).

The participating researchers explored a wide range of interpretation methods: write, sketch, photograph, film, record, measure, interview and model on-site. The research and results were documented in indoor installations (Figs. 6 and 9), on a homepage (Figs. 7, 10 and 12), which showed the researchers elaboration of on-site findings in a series of Tableaux Physiques. A final report documenting the process and outcome (Diedrich, Lee, Farso, Henriksson, 2015) brought these tableaux together as a diverse portrait of the metropolitan landscapes of the Öresund (doi:10.7480/spool.2016.1.1356.g1511).

Traveling Transect: Starting from the particular

We encouraged the research participants to follow their intuition: Instead of a strict 'scientific' transect, meticulously carried out as planned along a predefined abstract linear line, we welcomed deviations motivated by the need to readjust presumed orders and conceptions of site 'in the field', or possible distortions of their focus happening 'on the move' while on site. We wanted to inspire to greater awareness from any bodily knowledge and findings arising in, from and during the field research.

In short, we laid out the possibility to react directly to the particular sites travelled, either through their sensed (re)actions on site or their registrations of such. Firstly, we had to acknowledge how the bodily sensations may be formative in the understanding of a given site, and secondly, how these bodily encounters, or distortions of sensory attention, assist in building subject-born narratives around a site. The latter experiences or narratives in particular, can be used in a collaborative conversation with other researches or local stakeholders on what it is that defines, or gives value to, a specific site—and how to appropriate, translate and create awareness of such.

FIGURE 6 Tableau physique as in-studio performance during the Öresundsect course at SLU Alnarp: 'What are you doing?' by Kristin Wegren (Photograph by Marie Andersson, 2015).
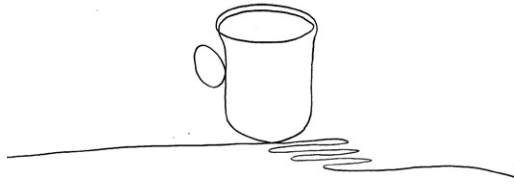
On the second day of the journey Someone found a man on a bench by a soccer field.
- This is my lucky day! Someone exclaimed, and plucked up the courage to ask:
- What are you doing?
- I´m drinking coffee.
- How interesting! But why?
- Well... This is kind of my livingroom.
- May I?
- Hand me your coffee mug!

The fourth day Someone crossed an unsettled plot in the city. Beyond acres of dry gravelly ground, flowers and vegetables grew! A man showed up behind a tiny fence.
-This is my lucky day! Someone exclaimed, and plucked up the courage to ask:
- What are you doing?
- I´m managing my allotment garden.
- How interesting! But why?
- Well... Life has to have a meaning.
- May I do the same?
- Join our movement. Together we may have a chance.

The seventh day the sound of an engine cut through the woods. A woman with a lawn mower showed up.
- This is my lucky day! Someone exclaimed, and plucked up the courage to ask:
- What are you doing?
- I´m creating a path.
- How interesting! But why?
- Well... It´s a shortcut. And a nice place. And nobody else will fix it.
- May I do this too?
- Maybe... Until anyone complain, I guess?
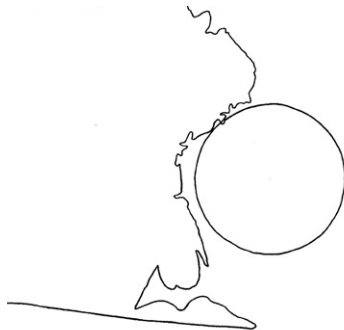
On the eleventh day Someone returned to the yellow brick stable and realized she had been moving in circles. Suddenly a professor showed up behind a screen.
- This is my lucky day! Someone exclaimed, and plucked up the courage to ask:
- What are you doing?
- I´m typing.
- Why?
- Because It´s a way of thinking.
- May I do that?
- Yes.

FIGURE 7 Tableau physique as graphic novel for the Öresundsect course documentation, SLU Alnarp: 'What are you doing?' (Image by Kristin Wegren, 2015).

As an example, the research team participant, Kristin Wegren delivered a performance as a one to one expression or replay of her appropriation of site (Fig. 5), which explored and manifested the site as a series of silent physical bodily encounters (e.g. climbing a fence, finding a flower). This performance (Fig. 6) established the outdoor spaces indoors and as a series of events and experiences happening silently with a surrounding, sensing audience. Additionally, it successfully (re)connected the site, or rather the site's experience, into a linear progression of encounters. Afterwards, this was translated into a series of drawings in which a simple hand drawn line was a common denominator for a story of her various site experiences (Fig. 7). In this case, site experience becomes translated in a very literate way—mimicked and replayed through a performance—which provided the audience with a strong sense of how site research evolved from the researcher's bodily encounters. Simultaneously, the hand drawn line convincingly represented an alternative Tableau Physique in which one line includes many varied experiences, and which challenged the idea of a travel experience as merely following a line on a map. Instead, it became both a concrete and abstract drawn line plotting a series of experiences in a poetic graphic novel representation. A potential script in the unscripted was further emphasised by the deliberate deviation by which the student approached her site(s) in a circular move over the territory. She might have overlooked these particularities if she had unreflectively followed the given linear transect itinerary. The deviations and distortions of her linear path on site ended up becoming fundamental narrative elements in her performance and drawings, and emphasised how both small spatial irregularities and everyday experiences were influential in forming her experience of the sites, and hence of the region travelled. Diedrich and Lee's Travelling Transect's includes an 'openness' to exploring other values that could define a given site. They see the deviations from the predefined lines of travel, research and representation, a legitimate way of appropriating and disseminating a site and its particularities. Particularities can also be understood as qualities.

From site to place

In the research, we initially used the term site to highlight how space is an ongoing, active entity in a constant process of creation. We understand site not as only geometrical or objective, but rather as a relational time-space situated in a context as described above. It is a site defined by the bodily subject experiencing (in) it. The site is a subject's surrounding; it is a site defined by space, time, light, smell and sound or, indeed, how the subject senses its surroundings. The participating researchers came into close contact with what the geographer Doreen Massey (2005) labels as trajectories or stories. She finds that this unsorted mess of relations and plots define space and therefore also a site. In this context, we define places as the temporary relations or rationale between these trajectories and stories, and how that which initially appears to be unrelated, becomes related in a given time-space and/or a given collaborative conversation of shared impressions. Because understanding and noticing these stories, or ongoing movements, assists in making sites into places of events and personal experiences, these personal, bodily experiences also become formative in the understanding of the given site, lending it significance and value. A site, then, should not be defined as being only one kind of place, but rather as an area within which a multitude, or multiplicity of, overlapping places exist in a given time-space. Such places do not need to be coherent or related to each other, even though they 'share' the same location. They are constantly appearing, disappearing and reappearing, containing both the related and unrelated. Place is something with a (hi)story that is beyond a site experience and the sensing subject itself, because:

"This is the event of place. It is not just that old industries will die, that new ones may take their place. Not just that Hill farmers round here may one day abandon their long struggle, nor that that lovely old

greengrocers is now all turned into a boutique selling tourist bric-a-brac. Nor, evidently, that my sister and I and a hundred other tourists soon must leave. It is also that the hills are rising, the landscape is being eroded and deposited; the climate is shifting; the very rocks themselves continue to move on. The elements of this 'place' will be, at different times and speeds, again dispersed." (Massey, 2005, p.140-141)

The point is that places change both in the very short time frame (one leaves a site and loses connection to the place) and the very long one (climate shifting and erosion of landscape), while also existing, or not, depending on the actual person experiencing on site. The participating researchers observed some of the stories or trajectories of the region, while missing others. Their observations led to very different impressions and representations of the region, which gave a hint of the region's place character, since none of them made the exact same observations.
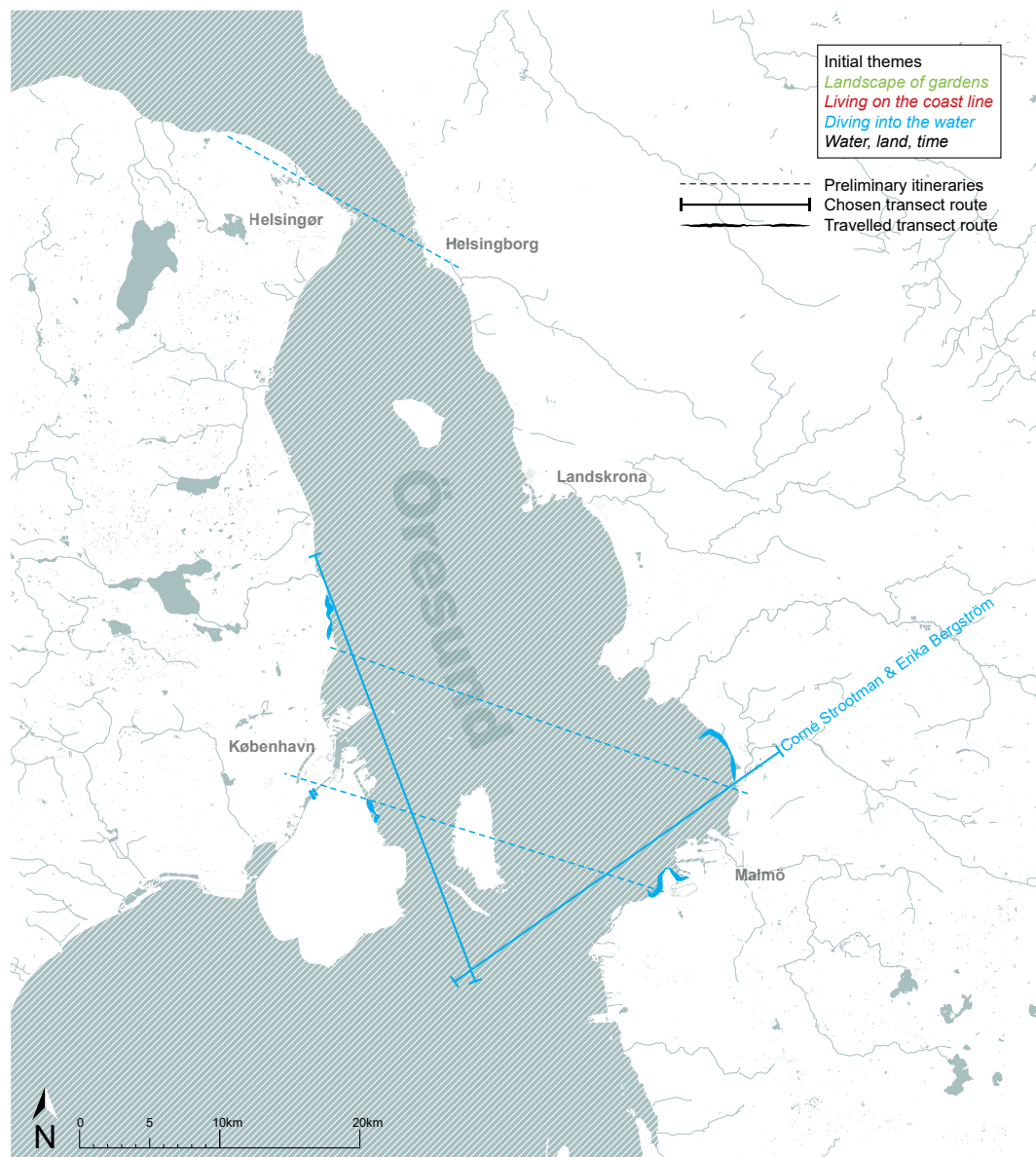
FIGURE 8 Map of individual transect concept and of deviated itinerary for the theme 'Diving into the water' by Corné Strootman & Erika Bergström, Öresundsect course at SLU Alnarp (Map by Alexander Henriksson, 2015).
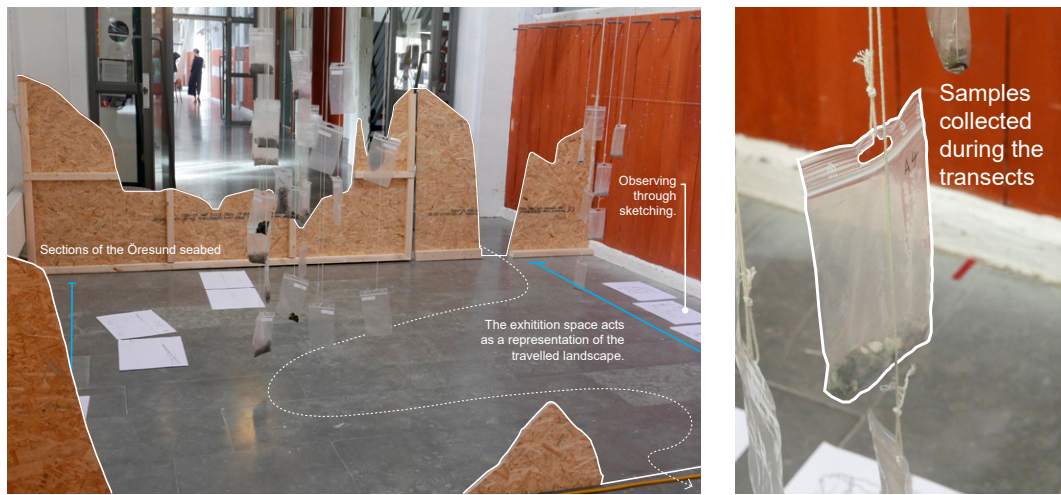
FIGURE 9 Tableau physique as on-campus exhibition item during the Öresundsect course: 'Contested/negotiated' by Corné Strootman & Erika Bergström (photo: Marie Andersson, collage: Alexander Henriksson, 2015).

a   *b*   *c*

FIGURE 10 Tableau physique as film submitted for the Öresundsect course documentation: 'Contested/negotiated' by Corné Strootman (screenshots with added quotes from Strootman's film made by Alexander Henriksson, 2015).

Corne Strootman & Erika Bergström's Travelling Transect research (Fig. 8) inspired a Tableau Physique exhibition format (Fig. 9) that showcased the Öresund strait as a physical model section and through materials gathered on their travels. By using sketches, movie clips, samples, sections and the exhibition space itself, the researchers portrayed the immense power of the Öresund strait with its currents that constantly change not only the visual appearance of the coastline, but ultimately also determine what type of activities and life it can support. The exhibition highlighted how people were responding to changes on site as well as their reaction to, or against, this ongoing change, and how this was formative in creating the urban landscape as places of contest and negotiation.

Another part of Strootman and Bergström's research led to the production of a short film portraying different scenes from their travels, which included stories added as a voiceover (Fig. 10). The footage was shot using a set of pre-defined rules for distance as measured between observation points. The film, which originated from an abstract, systematic way of collecting data through site travels, was developed into an understanding of the site that transcends both the abstract, visual and static. A greater awareness of the sensorial and its embeddedness in time, space and sound can assist in defining the values of a given place (Farsø & Munck Petersen, 2015; Munck Petersen & Farsø, 2016). Rather than being only factual or analytic, Strootman and Bergström's film established something poetic, ephemeral and sensorial. The film developed as a way to appropriate and disseminate the region as a place of experiences, or sensorial audio-visual imagery and reflection (doi:10.7480/spool.2016.1.1356.g1482).

It raises meta-questions: If this information, which at first hand appears like a non-relational set of film data, is accepted as just as 'true' or valuable a piece of research, or representation, as a classic drawn section of the seabed or a collected sand sample, the use of alternative media may assist our appropriation, representation and definition of sites by exposing these as sensorial, multi-layered storytelling places. While the travelling transect approach does not lead to normative representations of what a place is to become, it nevertheless raises awareness of the sensorial dimensions encountered on site. The region becomes loaded with (new) meaning, through sensorial experiences, had by the sensing subject or researcher in the field. Relational connections, places of event and co-existing scales of landscape, identified by the researcher in the field, tend to be disclosed by the bodily movements through the site(s), and how it effects the decision or, rather, data-making. It is through these subjective, bodily-based registrations that Öresund evolves as a multiplicity of places. Hence the travelling transect approach becomes a way to identify and potentially produce meaning within sites from a bodily perspective that might emphasise other, more sensory aspects or values.

Connecting, relating and curating particular places across the Öresund strait

When reworking Humboldt's transareal perspective as a Travelling Transect approach, one must acknowledge how we apply particular cultural perspectives related to, or building on, previously experienced geographies in our appropriation and experience of sites. As researchers, we intuitively try to relate the new and unknown to the known (context) or what we have experienced before. Yet this can colour our appropriation and understanding of a site, as we might be eager to make things or sites 'fit' within our frame of understanding(s). Humboldt regarded science as a mobile, transareal enterprise that moves across disciplinary and geographical boundaries and territories (Kutzinski, 2012). Especially when working in an increasingly globalised world as a researcher, this might have implications for our research work.

Here, potential distortions and deviations coming from spatial differences experienced on site may allow the generation new knowledge. An open-minded, sensorial approach to what the context is actually made of, can be formative for local empirical studies with inspiring or unexpected outcomes, as the field work may challenge possible pre-defined ideas of what are, for example, site qualities. In this context, the Tableau Physique, being partly constructed of the subject's bodily and personal experiences from site, becomes another point of view, a dataset that highlights relations, stories and findings of place value(s). As addressed by the participating researcher Caroline Dahl in her final studio paper, a Tableau Physique challenges the public authority's management of data. Both the quantitative as well as the qualitative data needs to have a larger degree of open access, in order to invite other disciplines or local inhabitants to contribute. A Tableau Physique is to be viewed not as a finished piece of knowledge but rather as something that adds to the complexity and multitude of how sites contain, or for a moment might become, a place for many different subjects and experiences. A series of travelling transects, then, might assist in conveying the plurality and multiplicity of a site (Henriksson, 2015). The open access nature of the Travelling Transect enables continuous possibilities of re-interpreting the data, which works tacitly as an effective way to unlock the data of one possible forced objective position. The approach may inspire work that can highlight values related to the site's heritage, the site as found—as experienced by the body—and the researcher's background and interest in the site. Yet, the Travelling Transect is an open frame by which an observer can survey and define a place, an approach that favours explorations of the relation(s) between phenomena as opposed to a phenomenon itself.
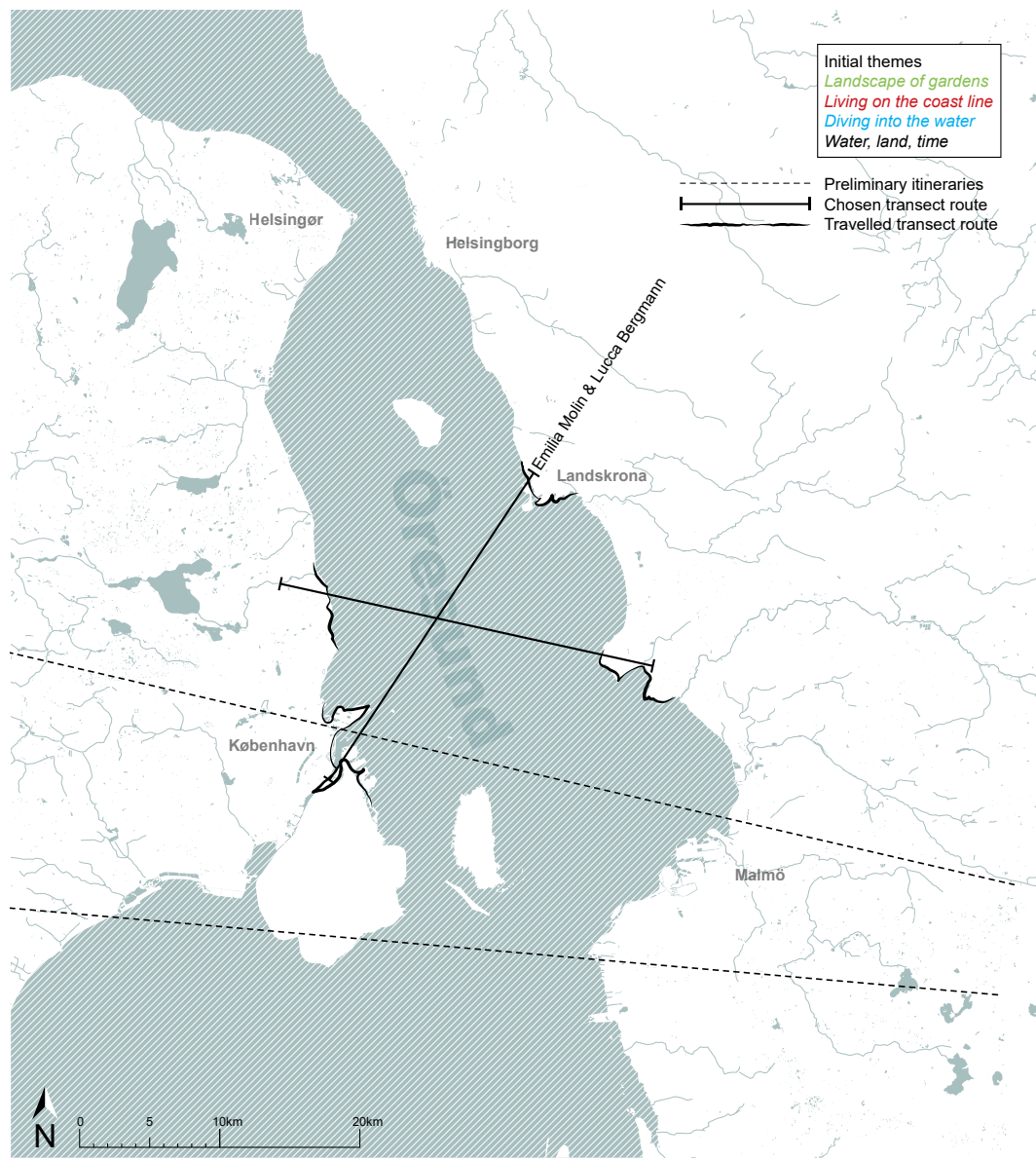
Emilia Molin's study of the Öresund region led to the development of a board game. The game was an engagement that sought to highlight relations within Öresund's bodies of land and water. It had a special focus on the visual appearance of powerscapes, like wind turbines, as well as the micro-stories that were encountered very near to the these (Fig. 12). In the game, urban landscape is not an experience of something static, linear or separable, but of something that is in need of being reviewed and understood as dynamic, shifting and interlinked. Here the Traveling transect led to the development of a Tableau Physique game, as a way to both research and appreciate, and to represent and communicate site qualities more dynamically, as the place could be experienced through engagement with the game. Molin's research was translated into a dynamic outcome that manifested Öresund as a living entity accommodating a multiplicity of places to be experienced in motion, or as an experience of engagements in surroundings defined by the sensing subject on a site or sites.

FIGURE 12 Tableau physique as a game board with game instructions and Rhino drawings to 3D-print game figures, submitted for the Öresundsect course documentation: 'Give and take' by Emilia Molin (image by Emilia Molin, 2015).

When using the Travelling Transect as an approach to oscillate between field research and studio research, it produces an immediate, yet less outspoken, set of references that can be applied as strategies and tactics to understand the particularities of the given site(s). By engaging and embodying ourselves in the site along abstract geographical lines, the researchers explored an alternative approach to common 2-D or 3-D framing of sites. A Google Earth or GPS wayfinder system includes little topographical data, while the complexity, topography and particularity of sites are being reduced. With the lack of qualitative data alternatives, functional geometries of plots, roads and buildings or flashy 2D images tend to prevail. The quality of something as fluffy as a bird song or the coffee enjoyed along a hedge will continue to sit uneasily within these frames of representation. If we do not find better ways to make room for such experiences in our research and representation, we might lose the meaning that they assist in creating and providing for us on site, as human beings. These impressions may give the site value and may include aesthetic experiences, which all together help to define the site as a place(s), or as something more than just a site, a map or locality.

The Tableau Physique: capturing particularities

On the basis of the above, we find the Traveling Transect to be a potent approach to engage with, view and represent sites by noticing the bodily, particular, and in-motion experiences. Through these representations and experiences of a site it is possible to communicate the potential aesthetic value for a sensing subject.

In the Öresundsect study, predefined themes and lines for a Traveling Transect approach were individualised by the participants, and led to a collective of Tableaux Physiques of the region. These tableaux that were radiating around or across Öresund positioned the sea as the regional centre point, or as a central landscape place-maker or -identifier. At first, the coastal environments were researched along abstract lines drawn across the Danish and Swedish territories. The expectation was that when studying and comparing these two different coast and inland studies along the same common line, this knowledge would evolve on what would or could constitute these in terms of place, and allow the discovery of new relational themes. The different travelled transects hereby assisted in manifesting more layered understandings of the complexity of sites, as well as relational aesthetics and activities on these, in which the Öresund strait played a less important role.

Deviations from initial planned lines of travelling across the territory, inflicted by sounds, smell, movements and sudden conversations and unexpected meetings, inspired a fieldwork that explored the territory as a wider totality. The research approach prompted relational conditions that tended to transgress scale in time and space. Basically, a bodily experience of moving physically through a landscape—while also being open to reacting to sudden changes in the itineraries—sharpens the minds of those involved, and increases the awareness of what constitutes a site. As a research approach, the Travelling Transect caters for greater appreciation of existing site specificities and a revision of value systems and therefore, perhaps, concepts of landscape beauty. The approach explored may manifest a greater awareness of landscapes 'as found' by the public, while it can inspire new ideas and readings of the landscape metropolis as comprising of a series of relational sites. In this context, the Tableau Physique offers itself as a way of considering and representing the nature of places in a more complex and bodily-focused way.

Hence, the travelling approach expresses a phenomenological, sensorial interest in architecture and design, in order to appropriate and represent qualities of sites that can be overlooked and ignored for their very particular, relational and site-specific aesthetics. It is the bodily encounters on site that can be formative in the understanding of current relationships and qualities within these. Such an approach may assist in laying foundations for how time-space-experience relations may be integrated in the view, gaze and stories of what constitutes a place. In this context, the approach could become a tool for translating personal encounters and stories into qualities and values for future designs. In the Öresundsect, the researchers moved from the Field (transecting multiple sites through multiple transects using various methods) to the Studio (analysing, amassing, assessing, making propositions, developing strategies of representation) to an Exhibition (visualising, spatialising, materialising, performing ideas across sites for critique) to a final Presentation and Publication (doi:10.7480/spool.2016.1.1356.g1510).

 (communicating, representing, manifesting, relating, and situating particular spatial values to be encountered on site). In the end, the exhibition—and the oral presentation of results of within this—provided an experience of stepping into a zone of appropriate site, a representation of place, which in different ways urged a bodily engagement by the perceiver in the research results.

The point we want to make is that when we explore, appropriate and disseminate a site more loosely— meaning without presupposing any exact outcomes—we enable possible deviations that may lead to a

conceptual and subjective room for ample opportunities for new thoughts and perspectives. These thoughts and experiences manifest a recognition of particular qualities that escape a standard 'beauty' radar and raise new understandings of how values can be found in a place. Knowledge gained working in one particular site in depth can then be significant in informing how other sites are then analysed, compared, reviewed, represented and redesigned. In this way, the travelling transsect approach may promote site readings that both express and counter trends in site understandings and sites connections, related to or embedded in a wider, global scale, system or world.

The Travelling Transect research on the Öresund manifests the urban landscape as a differentiated and phenomenological entity, and hence not just as one space, site or place. The landscape metropolis, the region, is a series of places of events and experiences, a constant multiplicity of space with ongoing relations, trajectories and stories in which key values are defined by various personal, bodily encounters and notations made in the field, on site. It is the researching subject that defines the space from his/her bodily experiences of sites, and the stories encountered on site, and relations between such stories, make these into places that reflect different values to be contested and negotiated. Yet any landscape value reflects the individual researcher's frame of reference. Based on how the knowledge is ordered, the Tableau Physique becomes an inspiration for engagement and an open access archive that can be further curated through the media chosen. It is through the multiplicity of transects that these representations of a site might, for real, begin to also convey the plurality of a site, as different transects yields different results, interpretations and directions.

The Traveling Transect is a research approach focused on appropriation and representation that can raise awareness, debate and question current and future values to be experienced on a site. The experienced particularities of any environment allows us to better collect, categorise and re-present sites, containers of tacit meaning, of unarticulated architectural stories, and that these can be shared with a wider public in new and interesting ways. In Humboldt's Tableau Physique, a site identity, or its particularity, is based on how it was experienced and disseminated. In this sense Diedrich and Lee's Travelling Transect approach inspires a more transareal movement to site research within the design disciplines. We find it motivating how such research highlights the sensorial relations of urban landscapes and how it may define the qualities of these in new ways - being sites of embedded bodily experiences and particular places with contested stories open for engagement.

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Endnotes

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Place mapping

transect walks in Arctic urban landscapes

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Abstract

This article investigates how experimental forms of urban mapping can reveal the particularity of places in non-standard urban situations with the intention of moving beyond the reductivism of still-dominant modernist modes of mapping and associated forms of planning. In order to do so, it reports on the emergence of a methodology involving transect walks, with the purpose of mapping the peculiarities of cultural landscapes. The study is located in cities and communities in the Arctic that are undergoing rapid transformation and are in urgent need of new conceptual approaches capable of enabling future thinking and strategic action. The article specifically asks how such a methodology works to includes the ephemeral and emergent, but also digital, dimensions of urban landscapes, and results in a complex reflexive method of critically reading and writing, of moving and locating, of seeing and picturing place mapping.

Keywords

landscape architecture; transect walk; Arctic; place; mapping

Background

As the Arctic is under pressure due to climate change and geo-politics, urbanisation is among the key transitions (Arbo, Iversen, Knol, Ringholm, & Sander, 2013; Smith, 2011). Arctic urban settlements are often considered to be marginal and in need of social and economic development, and little attention has been paid to the specifics of their urban landscapes. As a result, proposed changes are likely to be the results of projections of global and/or southern discourses and concerns, such as on economic development and industrialisation. In contrast to varied approaches to urban development elsewhere, Arctic cities and communities are still largely subjected to a master-planning framework. This is, in essence, the provision of placeless utopian models in which abstraction from the territory potentially leads to a lack of identification of the inhabitants with their environment (Hemmersam, 2016; Liscombe, 2006; Marcus, 2011).

The modernist cityscape that was a result of abstract utopian ideals and functional separation has been a concern for urban and landscape designers, which has sparked various methodological experiments aimed towards understanding them as places that hold relevance for the inhabitants. Since the 1950s, Kevin Lynch has identified the 'mental images' of the modern urban landscape (1960; Appleyard, Lynch, & Myer, 1964) and capturing the particularities of place came to be seen as an antidote to the abstract space and placelessness of modernism (Augé, 1995; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 2008) and the associated elimination of difference through mainstream industrial, capitalist production of architecture (Norberg-Schulz, 1980; Frampton, 1983). Various forms of urban mapping endeavoured to move beyond modernist epistemologies and develop new sensitivities in reading urban space (e.g. Debord, 1958; Venturi, Scott Brown, & Izenour, 1972).

The global phenomena of amorphous post-modern urban landscapes including sprawl and peri-urban development under governance style forms of planning based on private initiatives, has been critiqued for its uncoordinated pressure on the eco-system services that cities rely upon, but also for the lack of possibility for individuals to read, understand and identify with it (Qviström, 2012). Thomas Sieverts (2003) argues that legibility and intelligibility are key to overcoming negative connotations and that seeing them as real places and communities work against processes of social exclusion and environmental degradation. Addressing the issue of meaning, there have been calls for modes of understanding urban landscapes that include dynamic and action-based notions of place that are 'articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings' (Massey, 1994: 154; see also Hvattum, 2010; Dovey, 2010). This includes getting inside the complexities of space and place, i.e. as ways of mapping flows and invisibles (Allen, 2000; Amoroso, 2010) as well as forms of urban mapping that endeavour to work within the trans-locational dimension of any given site (e.g. Bunschoten, Binet, & Hoshino, 2001), which shows that places are not bounded but woven into wider 'power geometries' (Massey, 1994: 149).

Postmodern notions of 'reading' the city through mapping, in which maps were seen as social constructions (Harley, 1988; Wood, 1992), reflect the 'representative turn' in the social sciences. What postmodern forms of mapping share is the view that 'urban and cartographic spaces are entwined' (Brook & Dunn, 2012, p. 11; see also Cosgrove, 2006), and that 'mapping [is] a collective enabling enterprise, a project that both reveals and realizes hidden potential', thus 'creating and building the world as much as measuring and describing it' (Corner, 1999, p. 213). This highlights that mapping not only entails 'reading' but also 'writing' urban space. In recent years, mapping has been influenced by non-representational theory, including 'the material turn' in geography (e.g. Bennett, 2010; Nyseth & Pløger, 2015; Thrift, 2007), focussing on how place is enacted or performed through various practices rather than representations. This perspective indicates the importance of the 'embodied' experience of space such as through walking (e.g. Wylie, 2005), over representation and

text. In urban mapping 'reading' is an often-used metaphor, but in a post-representational mapping context, various other media and literacies are evoked.

Reflecting this perspective, 'reading' urban landscapes through mapping is a matter of design or framing with the use of a tool – a 'reading aid' that also entails writing the city. There is a need to investigate the methodological dimensions of such an approach that is reflexive and involves emergence. Proceeding experimentally enables us to enact, effect, annotate and critique, and interpret mapping with reference to the specificity of place and how knowledge is 'located'. This should also happen in an architectural frame of seeing the unbounded and dynamic dimensions of place as 'site' (Burns & Kahn, 2005).

The transect is a well-known concept in landscape architecture, often referring to sections of bioregions or ecosystems, local topographies or urban landscapes. It has been charged in recent years as a normative urban planning model emerging out of the New Urbanism school (Steuteville & Langdon, 2009). Transect walks cut across urban landscapes in order to capture diversity rather than averages (Zeeuw & Wilbers, 2004), they appear as a suggestion for a socio-cultural educational approach (e.g. Melemis, Tixier, & Brayer, 2010), and as a methodology proposed by Diedrich, Lee and Braae (2013; 2014) in which 'the scientific ordering implied by the transect line becomes the designerly open work of twists and turns' with the purpose to 'continuously reveal site qualities as narratives exposed by the site to ultimately effect potential design for the site' (2014: n.a.) [1]. Diedrich et al. see 'site thinking as on-site thinking' (2013:194) proposing a need for developing methods for identifying and building situated knowledge. In doing so they emphasise the embedded and experiential dimension of the transect walk.

With an ambition to inform practices of place appreciation in other non-standard urban contexts, we have worked to develop a multi-layered and multi-method approach that seeks to offer thicker description and critical analysis of reading and writing the city. We concur with Diedrich et al. (2013; 2014) in seeing a dynamic interplay of elements as being central to developing situated and methodological knowledge: in our inquiry this was between the device of the linear transect walk, the affordances of an iPhone mapping app, the contexts of use and influence of site, walking, on-site thinking and subsequent critical reflections.

Method and application

In our evolving approach that explored physical, experiential, ephemeral, and digital aspects of place, we ask what the local enactment of the transect walk does in terms of shifting the non-representational perspective of 'reading' and 'writing' urban space, to one in which ascription to the place is important – that is: writing space before reading it, thus shaping the understanding of space via the transect walk as a tool.

Our research design and methods are broadly framed within qualitative inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) that seeks to reveal situated and emergent details with respect to context and culture. [2] We draw on a mix of design techniques and research methods to provide a multi-layered account of investigating the transect walk at four levels. This we did in an interdisciplinary team of designer-researchers representing overlapping fields (architecture, urbanism, landscape, literature, applied linguistics, ethnography, history, design studies, cultural studies, digital media, and fiction) that enriched our methodological approach. Overall, these levels may be seen as methodologically constituting a collaborative ethnography that also allows for theoretical innovation (Rappaport, 2008).

FIGURE 1 Transect walk, Vardø, 26 January 2014. The digital map layer exported from MAPPA can be displayed and post-processed using Google Earth or other geobrowsers (Map data: Google, Astrium).

First, we investigated the device of the transect walk itself and its contexts of use. With prior familiarity with Arctic urban and landscape settings and research, as well as experience in using related urban mapping tools in teaching and research (e.g. van Schaick & van der Spek, 2008; Morrison & Aspen, 2013), the architect-urbanist researcher on our team arrived at the technique of first studying aerial images and maps of the settings in question. Central to this method was the choice of working across urban structures in order to capture the largest variety and avoid pre-configured hierarchies of space (e.g. Nielsen, 2001).

Second, we worked in a mode of co-creative construction (e.g. Koskinen, Zimmerman, Binder, Redström, & Wensveen, 2011) in taking up a locative media GPS-based iPhone application. This tool was specifically geared towards cultural urban mapping using Points of Interest (PoI), the entry and upload to a location of text, images and thematic hashtags (Morrison & Aspen, 2013). It is geared for use by teams with a shared assignment, and the resulting data can be exported as a digital map layer (KML) (Fig. 1). The app was built in collaboration with a mobile technology developer, an interdisciplinary university research lab and a transdisciplinary research team in our design university (Hemmersam, Aspen, Morrison, Sem, & Havnør, 2015). The app was tested in urban contexts by the design and research team, as well as architecture and design students, before being taken up in Arctic settings.

Third, in each of the five Arctic urban settings transect lines were determined by the research team. Typically, the transect walk occurred as: 1) an informative background study of related research, including maps, urban plans and images; 2) a journey to the location through the wider regional and local landscape; 3) early orientation to the setting from local specialists. Following 4) the walk, 5) a short briefing session was held with the team of researchers, and then 6) discussion took place as to the perceived and identified features of the setting and its histories, and urban and landscape contextual particulars. This continued process provided the team with a contextualised view prior to the actual activity of making a transect walk infused with earlier practices and principles of sensory and situated ethnography.

Fourth, our investigation included methods of observation, data collection, and situated and sensory ethnographic writing and accounts (e.g. Clifford & Marcus, 1986). The transect walks are linear movements that start and end at distinct points in the urban landscape. In practice, the walked trajectory deviates from the straight line; obstacles were encountered during the walk, and the view (and the observer) is drawn by events and objects on both sides of the line, introducing serendipity into the mapping (Hemmersam,

Morrison, & Aspen, 2016). During the walks, the experiential dynamics of walking and the implied tactile relationship to the landscape was shared by the multidisciplinary project team, which facilitated situated appreciation of the often ephemeral particularities of sites beyond individual perception. As a method, the physical, sensory walk (Pink, 2007) was augmented by contextualising, as well as through interpretative annotations relating to issues, questions, and interests that were brought up by mapping participants depending on their individual perspectives. The resulting co-created map/texts were then revisited and reviewed as digital map layers, which opened up for comparing and contrasting across sites and cities, and their particularities of place.

Next, we present a brief and selected view of the application of the methods used in the five Arctic cities from September 2013 to May 2015. The method developed as the specifics of each instance related to local conditions and the makeup of the mapping team. Several of the transect walks also included experts and community members and, in one instance, students of landscape architecture. In addition, on several occasions encounters en route provided insight into local practices and knowledge.

Murmansk, Russia

This, the largest city in the Arctic, is urgently in need of re-imagining itself. It is losing population and its strategic geo-political location is in flux. Here, three mapping sessions took place in 2013 and 2014: first with the group of researchers, the second with a group of local informants, [3] and third with an international team of landscape architecture students. [4] Beyond providing insight into social issues such as drug use and substandard dwellings, and the emerging scene of cultural entrepreneurs, our structured planning of the event to move across urban structures brought out contrasting features, such as the pedestrian openness of the Soviet era urban landscape, which was in contrast to the post-Soviet car-based city. In the latter landscape, devoid of traditional spatial hierarchies, recent societal changes were evident in functions such as shopping centres, a ski slope, and a wooden orthodox monastery. As the transect line directed our movement, methodologically we went from front to back, from public to semi-private (Fig. 2a). This revealed evidence of a material culture of scarcity in the creative reuse of materials, such as old tank treads for rainwater grills, military style steel road panels for fences (Fig. 2b), used pre-fab concrete slabs for informal garages, and even the re-vamping of an entire Soviet era apartment block as an international hotel. As a correction to our expectations of Arctic cities, we found few place-specific adaptations of the standard Soviet urban model, one of such being a climatized stair to an exposed residential district on a hill. One key emergent activity was our diversion to an extensive garage area that was typical of Soviet area cities and comprised characteristic enclosed metal structures, inhabited by older males and filled with workshops. This was in contrast to the peripatetic, perambulatory character of the open discussion around cultural mapping, youth politics and urban change on the walk itself.
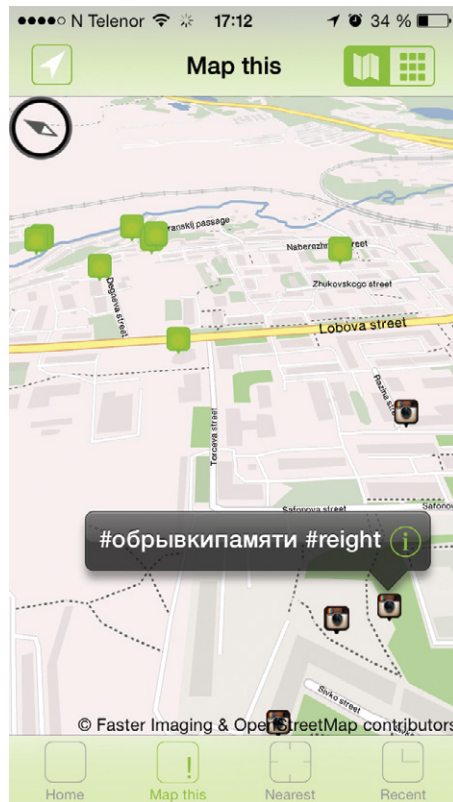
FIGURE 2 a). Screenshots of the MAPPA iPhone app. Points of Interest are annotated using text, image and thematic hashtags Geo-located Instagram images also appear in the app and can be included in the resulting mapping. b). Fence made out of steel road panels.

Vardø, Norway

This easternmost town in Norway, located on a small island off the mainland, has had its population halved since the mid-1970s as industrial fishing has replaced local operations. Currently it is positioning itself with regard to projected petrochemical extraction in the Barents Sea and possible increased shipping activity along the Northeast Passage. Here, two transect sessions were conducted: the first in mid-winter 2014 [5] , and the second – same trajectory, reverse direction – in June of the same year. This structure revealed distinct seasonal landscapes. In the first, wind and snow shapes the movement of local inhabitants, but the reverse condition was also evident in one observation of a snow pile that was used to block a road to prevent traffic from passing the ski and sliding slope for children in the centre of the town. The second seasonal landscape was one in which edible plants were identified by locals with a particular interest in developing a regional cuisine. The acute question of how Arctic communities experience and respond to climate change and global warming is partially answered by the visible presence of new terraces and balconies being added to the older buildings of the town. Methodologically, an interesting matter arose. In our first event, we saw a dispersal of focus from the given activity of taking images and uploading them using smartphones to several participants switching to taking photographs with their high-end cameras, as if prompted by their walking and looking but also by an unexpected intention to document better images for the wider research within the project. While the event leader and the app development leader asked participants to keep to the

task at hand, this was evidence of how the landscape and acts of walking overwhelmed the formality of the transect walk and its focus on locative media production.

Tasiilaq, Greenland

This growing town has around 2000 inhabitants and is isolated from the more populated west coast by the Inland Ice Cap. It is located on an island and for seven months of the year, the frozen sea prohibits ships from entering its harbour. Hunting and fishing still make up a substantial part of the local economy, while tourism is the other significant economic sector. During our walk, we found evidence of the culturally framed economic practices and traces of the use of the landscape in the form of omnipresent hunting and fishing equipment and facilities. A transect walk conducted in August 2014 revealed the island conditions of the town's infrastructure, which starts and ends at the urban periphery. In order to be self-sustained for more than half the year, and because of its administrative role in a large region, the town has to have 'everything' within its borders: social and technical infrastructure and supplies. [6] The logistics involved in supplying the town is evident in the shipping containers and wooden pallets that were used as adaptations to the existing architecture – for instance, as house extensions or as terraces or improvised outdoor benches (Fig. 3a) and in markers of occupational and cultural lifestyles (Fig. 3b). In terms of method, the inclusion of several transect participants not party to the overall project and ignorant of the development and background of the approach, resulted in a distinct professional focus and interpretation of architectural, landscape architectural and urban planning features of the setting, thus revealing the methodical schooling emerging through the iterative enactment and development of the approach.

FIGURE 3 a). Transect walk, Tasiilaq, 28 August 2014. Ephemeral dimensions of space are captured through the transect walk, such as the improvised bench made of shipping pallets. b). Evidence of hunting culture is omnipresent in the urban landscape, along with expressions of contemporary lifestyles. Thematic hashtags are used across mappings. (Image by authors/Google DigitalGlobe 2016).

Fermont, Canada

This mining town in Québec features a spectacular 1.3 km climate wall (le Mur-Écran) that protects it from the northern winds and houses all major communal urban functions in a climate-protected interior. [7] The transect walk of spring 2014 revealed evidence of the economic and demographic transition the town is undergoing in the form of recent camp-like accommodation structures for the fly-in fly-out workforce of the nearby Mount Wright iron mine, while sheltered on the south side of the wall we find the original permanent housing for the miners and their families. The abundance of recreational Skidoos (snowmobiles), large trucks with oversized tyres and even live lobsters in the local supermarket signalled a particular lifestyle that contrasted with the trailer homes and camp like accommodation of the fly-in fly-out mineworkers.

Method-wise, the surprise over such observations within a restricted geographical and time-span represented by the transect walk triggered a retrospective reflection for the single researcher involved. The shared narrative was missing – it provided little post-walk processing and discussion. However, in a wider context across the mapping in the five cities it contributed to emerging nuanced perspectives on the similarities between arctic communities and their contrasting local articulations.

Longyearbyen, Svalbard

This historic mining settlement on Svalbard is the northernmost urban settlement of significant size in the world and has a population of over 2000. It functions as the administrative hub of the archipelago, and is currently in a transitional phase from coal mining to tourism, research and education as its main industries. This territory was the location of the last of the series of Arctic transect walks conducted in the Future North project in the spring of 2015. Crossing the river that runs through the centre of town revealed that the embankments were constructed to protect the growing city. Descending into the river space made the city disappear from view and the surrounding mountains suddenly appeared as a visual continuity of the sculpted riverbanks. Thus, following the transect line made it clear to us that in this location the landscape was embedded within the city, just as the city was embedded within the landscape (Fig. 4). Methodologically this serendipitous insight, triggered by the structured movement, served to trigger pre-existing theoretical perspectives in the team's landscape researchers, which served to provide additional depth to our conceptualizations of the location. In addition, one issue we faced was that the group spread out over the line quite quickly as people followed specific interests, with some walking back to review areas and issues previously addressed (Fig. 5). In terms of developing a collaborative ethnographic perspective, Erickson and Stull (1998) warn about 'herding' cats: our experience was that this did not ultimately matter as our model of the overall activities of the transect walk allowed for re-iteration and dialogue at the final meeting point of the line and later in a debriefing session. Our digitally located annotations facilitated both dispersal (as each member was absorbed in on-site input) and a shared narrative emerging after the walk. This also pointed to how dialogue occurred within, across and after the walk. The linear path and seemingly sequential process of mapping was extended interpretatively later in the same field work visit to discuss relations and contrasts between past and present. This involved reflecting further on historically varied yet contemporaneously visible built features adapted to the climate and geology, e.g. disused earlier mining transportation infrastructures stand in sharp contrast to contemporary above-ground and apparent urban delivery systems for water, heating and sewage.

FIGURE 4   Transect walk, Longyearbyen May 26, 2016. Excerpt from the collaborative record of the transect walk reflecting on the experience of crossing the river.).

a   b   c

FIGURE 5   Svalbard transect walk. The group of researchers dispersed along the transect line. (Photographs by authors).

Discussion and Findings

In line with Richard Sennett's (1990) call for an urban research based on direct interaction rather than abstracted observation, the transect walk functions as a device to experience and investigate urban spaces as places. However, in the methodological development and application of the transect walk we are cognisant that 'all walking studies are necessarily partial' (Shortell & Brown, 2014). In such reflexive awareness, our approach reveals characteristics of qualitative forms of inquiry in the study of cities. We find that the transect walk activity brings out our own preconfigured notions of cities and landscapes (Traganou, 2009), revealing both our individual 'luggage' of experiences and professional perspectives, and our shared

expectations of what will be found based on experiences from previous transects in locations that may appear similar, but are in fact quite different in terms of demography, economy and challenges.

The Longyearbyen mapping along with the Tasiilaq transit walk were concurrent with educational urban and landscape design studios under the instruction of project researchers, in which the place specific approaches were further developed in conjunction with local actors. [8] The process of conceptualization was facilitated through mediation, as exemplified by our blog-like website, but also by booklets aimed at local inhabitants, key actors and policy makers. [9]

Digital technologies have come to be seen as essential in many forms of urban mapping, primarily through functionalist Geographical Information Systems (GIS) approaches, but also as new modes of dynamic representation (Brook & Dunn, 2014; see also Wilford, 2001) regarding the digital map as an expressive architectural production in its own right. We see relevance in a third approach, namely that of exploring and exploiting the agency of the digitally enabled mapping activity. In this, we move beyond casting digital mapping tools as functionalist, rather enacting them through practices that enable emergence to occur through the activity of mapping and associated mediations. In such a view, we set about investigating urban settings as 'legible' and place as something that can be 'discovered' in a post-structuralist sense that attends to situated knowledge. Critically, we concur with Brook and Dunn that 'current thinking on the role of mapping acknowledges it as a confluence of practices that facilitates emergent characteristics to reveal themselves to both the producer and user' (2014:12). Locative mediated mapping is a socio-technical cultural activity that attends to the situated, contextual, and emergent, but needs active reflection and critique about its own affordances and uses in places to underline that place is 'a social product—one less designed and constructed than enacted or performed through specific behaviours and practices' (Shepard, 2011: 22).
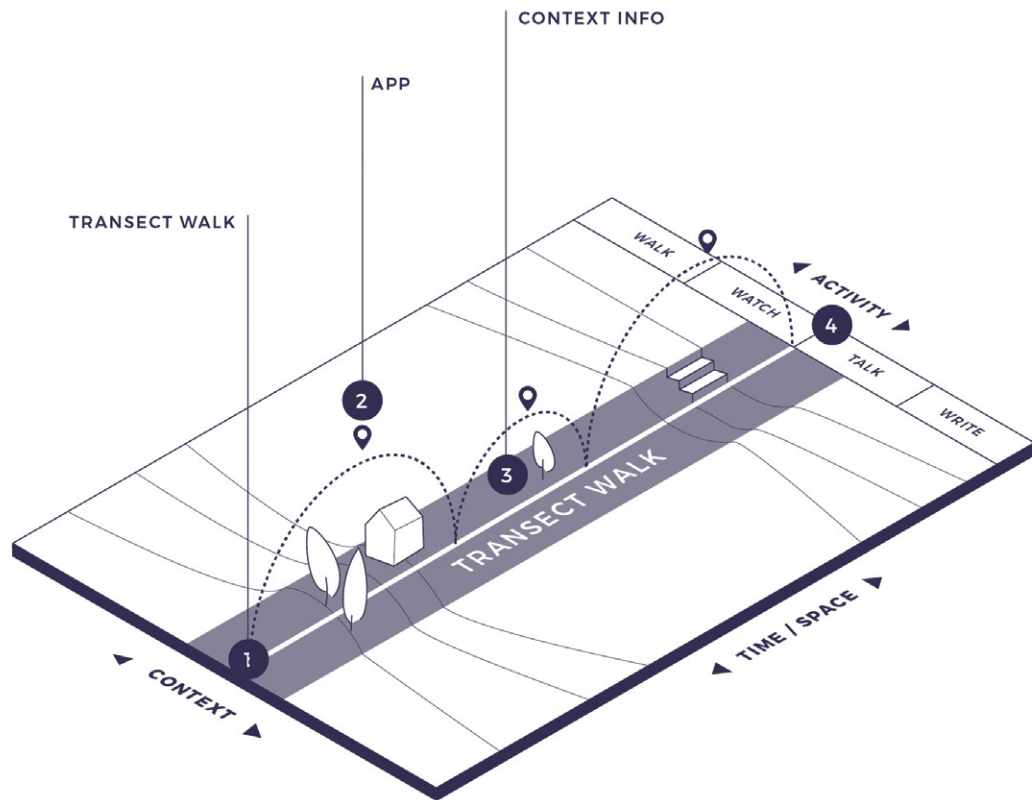

FIGURE 6 Transect walk methodological mapping relations: between situation, context, tools, participants and processes.

In our experience the transect walk works as a reading aid that includes ephemeral and emergent aspects of place as it enables serendipitous discovery, which is not just random encounters and events, but the activation of knowledge and theory in the individual and in a group of researchers. Fine and Deegan (1996) argue that serendipity is about providing opportunity for storytelling and even social reflexivity. They also identify serendipity in the social encounters that surround and enable forms of ethnographic fieldwork, as well as in the fortuitous dimension of being as a researcher at the right place at just the right time to observe events that reveal significant dimensions of a place. [10]

We present our perspective on the transect work in a visual model to summarise the material above (Fig. 8). We call this a Model of the Multi-level of Transect Walk. It is underpinned by the four levels we mentioned above. We do not see these as universally applicable or necessarily sequential in how others may go about using transect walks in urban mapping. Rather, our interest is in shaping a reflexive model that allows for the dynamic qualitative characteristics of situational, liminal and emergent inquiry – including contingencies, serendipity, juxtapositions and differences – to be documented, shared and critiqued. This still takes places along the formal trajectory of the line as participants, alone and together, go about both reading and writing the urban landscape, but also in relation to specific Arctic contexts, of what we term acts of re-reading and re-writing transectally.

This formulation offers a methodological framing for working with transect walks not merely as lines, mobile phone uploads, sensory experience or linear analysis. Re-reading and re-writing transectally is a dynamic activity that can be conducted in one place, along the same line by the same team or by others. Alternatively, it can happen along different lines in the same environment; it may also be applied iteratively, as in our case, across contexts of variation as a means of mapping urban landscapes.

The reflexive inter-relationship between reading and writing indicates that urban landscapes are not simply read off the surface of cities with digital tools (apps) or phenomenologically overwrought as experiential accounts. Instead, we suggest that this iterativeness is a methodological dynamic. It is a potential part of developing a larger, wider, contrasting and diverse set of mappings in which transect walks may be read in relation to their own enactment, critically and reflexively, but also with regard to those of others in the same city or different settings.

Contextual knowledge is gathered through prior information gathering and by consulting experts and stakeholders, community members and individuals. Contextual knowledge is further gathered en route, sensorially and through the team/participants meeting and talking at key features or discussing surprising interruptions or occurrences as well as with persons moving and working in the environment. The transect walk thus also engages more widely with the broader setting of a specific locale and its related, yet diverse, perspectives and relations between lived experience and situated understandings of place and space. Walks may also then be compared and contrasted, whether in the same line, in different lines within a place, or in various settings. Equally, each walk may be understood dynamically as an act of walking that is realised performatively through embodied and experiential knowledge gathering, supplemented by a variety of other information and communication types.

Conclusion

Our work has been conducted as a design and research team that has sought to develop understandings of the place particularities of non-standard or isomorphic urban landscapes. Specifically, we did this by experimentally applying the transect walk as a method (a reading aid) across five very different Arctic cities undergoing change. Locals and other sources informed us, and we developed an emerging practice in which we openly investigated the interrelation and agency of the visual and ephemeral, as well as material and digital virtual site properties, in the appreciation and production of place. We argue that this may be understood methodologically through linked layers or relations of mixed methods (design techniques plus research methods) through acts of re-reading and re-writing transectally. Our research suggests that urban mapping practices that entangle perception and conceptualization have potential to be further developed to acquire sufficient stability to be applied beyond Arctic communities. It was the mapping activity itself – not the mapping data or an expressive map product – that was ultimately important in the course of development. This was enabled by what may broadly be termed the serendipitous and emergent dimension of our approach that triggered connections between physical, visual or ephemeral occurrences, community and stakeholder perspectives, and the individual and collective knowledge and theory apparatus of the researchers – in the form of narratives that made sense – and helped us make sense of place.

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Notes

[1] Transect walks are participatory methods used for multidisciplinary appraisal of local resources in economic and social development contexts (e.g. Participatory Rural Appraisal; World Bank. (2008). Methodology for transect walk. Retrieved from http://pmgsy.nic.in/downloads/WorldBank/ECOP/Annexures/ANNEXURE%2020-2.pdf; Pretty, J. N. (1995). A trainer's guide for participatory learning and action. London: International Institute for Environment and Development).

[2] The research reported upon here is part of the Future North research project (www.futurenorth.no), which looks into the agency of Arctic landscapes and populations in the imagineering and crafting of futures. The project applies a multidisciplinary perspective on Northern territories, and we have experimented with the travel as a research method for documenting and reading landscapes and cities. In our research we have asked how a more sensitive mapping of Arctic urban landscapes can be developed, with a focus on their particularity as places as the 'rich and complicated interplay between people and the environment' (Cresswell 2004:11).

[3] http://www.oculs.no/projects/future-north/news/?post_id=3570

[4] From the Academy of Territorial Studies at AHO and the Arctic University of Norway.

[5] http://www.oculs.no/projects/future-north/news/?post_id=3590

[6] http://www.oculs.no/projects/future-north/news/?post_id=3885

[7] http://www.oculs.no/projects/future-north/news/?post_id=3540

[8] Local planners partook in studio reviews and projects for Svalbard were exhibited in Longyearbyen.

[9] http://www.oculs.no/projects/future-north/news/?post_id=4297

[10] We see our approach as underlining that place, like space, is 'a social product – one less designed and constructed than enacted or performed through specific behaviors and practices' (Shepard 2011: 22). Through our transect walks we have come to see mapping as neither functionalist nor as an isolated design exercise in itself. Rather, working with and towards situated knowledge and ultimately community empowerment, the agency of the activity and the map product is what matters. As Massey (2005) reminds us, material relations are themselves in motion, including the physical as well as the social and the network, yet there is still need to attend to the 'here'. We find that our approach goes some way towards complicating relations between the agency of the urban landscape itself with social and cultural processes.

Experiential mappings

approaching the landscape through atmosphere

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Abstract

This paper argues that the opening up of landscape analysis to variables that exceed the 'tangible' or traditionally 'parameterized' values provides alternative access to the specificities of the landscape.
In particular, the concept of 'atmosphere' as a particular dimension of the embodied experience, is proposed as an operative vehicle for the enrichment of the cartographic interpretation of the landscape. By placing the emphasis on atmosphere in terms of its causes, rather than its effects on our emotional sensibility, cartography enhances the identification of the particular by interpreting the specific manner that the properties of the landscape configure the experience. The paper is structured in two parts. The first part is a theoretical inquiry of the inter-subjective patterns of perception that define 'atmosphere', with the objective to bring the concept of atmosphere into the professional practice and discourse of landscape architecture through the agency of mapping. In the second part, the proposed approach to atmosphere is tested through a series of mappings of an agrarian, ordinary landscape, situated in Catalonia, Spain. The cartographic exercises point towards the identification of spatial patterns that potentially function as activators of atmospheres, as indicators for the presence of particular modes of landscape experience.

Keywords

landscape analysis; embodied experience; atmosphere; mappings

Introduction

The identification and understanding of particular places, central to the understanding of landscape, are subject to individual perception, meaning and interpretation. However, in the usual cartography which is needed for an integrated approach to landscape and landscape character, objective data and scientific rigour take the lead, which seems to exclude an experiential reading of the landscape. So the following research question arises: Can embodied experience serve as an operative vehicle for the enrichment of the cartographic interpretation of the landscape? Furthermore, how effective can this approach be for the identification of the particular?

The European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000) has marked a turning point for the acknowledgement of the landscape as a shared resource to be preserved and managed. Its application in the Catalonian Territory, coordinated by the Landscape Observatory, resulted in the development of the Landscape Catalogues, conceived as instruments for the introduction of landscape objectives and guidelines into spatial planning. The elaboration of the catalogues has been based on a fundamental conceptual, methodological and procedural outline as synthesized in the Prototype Landscape Catalogue, redacted by the Landscape Observatory. In the prototype, landscape is defined as an area as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the interaction of natural and/or human factors that make one landscape differ from another. The interpretation of the landscape character is based on the cartographic identification and characterization of a vast series of ¨values¨, varying from the ecological, patrimonial, productive and aesthetic qualities of the territory, finally distilled in the delimitation of landscape units of a distinctive character, and the degnition of a series of objectives that should inform the decisions made in the corresponding Partial Territorial Plan.

This process, clearly pointing towards an integrated approach to landscape, nonetheless has largely submitted the cartographic identification of value to three of the basic criteria of cartography: geo-localization, parameterization, and measurement, in a still conventional understanding of the cartographic product, as evidence of a ¨scientific¨ process whose objectivity cannot be questioned. This urge for scientific rigor, assisted by the use of Geographical Information Systems, transforms these criteria into constraints when it comes to the identification of ¨other¨ values, generically defined as the ¨intangible¨: Concepts like sense of place, genius loci, embodied experience, ambiance, aura or mood, considered to belong to the subjective perception rather than to the ¨objective¨ structure of the environment, remain unapproachable through the conventional [1] methodologies of cartographic parameterization and measurement, but undoubtedly central to the very same definition of ¨landscape¨.

Among these concepts, this paper focuses on embodied experience for its intrinsic duality of oscillating constantly between the physical/biological dimensions of space and body. The effects of this interaction nonetheless have been largely looked at and investigated at a specific scale and from a specific point of view: descriptions focus on human scale environments while interpretations or representations opt for the point of view of the perceiving subject.

The arguments developed in this paper support the position that the ¨submission¨ of the embodied to cartography, and thus to the laws of a two-dimensional representation and to a scale that differs from that of a downscale environment, activates the research on the capacity of maps to interpret the field of experience of the landscape that exists between body and space. Among the effects of this process lies an alternative decoding of the specificities of the landscape, driving cartography towards a more grounded, experiential interpretation of the landscape, revealing special qualities as interpreted by the effect they have on the embodied experience.

Atmosphere as a filter

The subject is certainly immensely complex; nonetheless, this paper focuses on a particular dimension of the embodied, filtered through the concept of atmosphere. In this paper, atmosphere is addressed through one of its more mediated meanings, one that points to a resonance between the properties of environment and patterns of feeling or emotion, also commonly referred to as a ¨first impression¨.

Why atmosphere?

Initially, the concept of atmosphere is suggestive for its long-term relationship with the concept of character, both forming expressions of the ¨spirit¨ of place, or genius loci [2]. (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). But, most importantly, this research addresses atmosphere as an exemplification of the potentialities arising when the dichotomy between body and environment is exceeded, when the analysis is not focusing either on the objective properties of the environment, seen as the ¨other¨, the ¨exterior¨ objective world, nor on its interpretations by the perceiving subject, but precisely on the in-between field of experience.

From theory to practice

Existing literature on atmosphere comes mainly from the field of architecture, with perhaps the most known examples of Norberg Schulz (1980) and Peter Zumthor (2006), and from aesthetics, more recently represented by Gernot Böhme (1993, 2003, 2013) and Juhani Pallasmaa (2014), among others. The majority look at atmosphere through an essentially phenomenological perspective, defining some of its principal qualities: unfinished, dynamic and affective (Andreson 2009). Nonetheless, through this body of knowledge, a considerable gap could be detected when it came to the definition of atmosphere in terms of its causes and at a scale that differs to that of a downscale, designed environment. Spatial properties, such as materiality, light and sound, as proposed by Böhme (2013) and Zumthor (2006) provide a ¨stage¨ for intense atmospheric ¨effects¨ to unfold into a controlled, designed environment. Such properties, unquestionably central to the discussion of atmosphere, could be potentially exported to differentiated scales of work and partially to open, non-designed environments. In any case, the objective would be to export their representation to cartography without impoverishing their interpretation and, most importantly, enmesh them with a structural rethinking of the analysis of the complex underlying orders that configure landscape.

Beyond recovering all the definitions that the word has acquired in the literature of architecture, aesthetics or art, this research centers on defining atmosphere as spatially situated in order to enhance its cartographical interpretation in terms of its causes and not of its effects on our emotional sensibility. Although existing theoretical approaches to atmosphere do not immediately provide a clear point of departure for this process, they do offer us some significant clues on the essence of the phenomenon, since all seem to converge at the following common point: Atmosphere, as first impression, or even as a kind of prediction, positions the body within a field of sense and experience prior to the retrieval of intellectually sustained descriptions.

This quality of atmosphere, as an instinctive and immediate reaction to space, permits its linkage with the inter-subjective patterns of perception that define this precise moment of perception, as proposed by the embodied perspective to perception and cognition: These ¨patterns¨ are localized precisely between body and mind, body and environment, perception and action, in terms of a dynamic mutual influence. This process leads to an emergence of ¨knowledge through the primary agent's bodily engagement with the environment, rather than being simply determined by and dependent upon either pre-existent situations or personal construals¨. (Wilson, Robert A. and Foglia, Lucia. 2016)

Inspired by and adapting references from the embodied perspective of cognition, we approach some of the dimensions of intelligibility of the environment that atmosphere brings together: Atmosphere as a first impression and prediction finds its resonance with the theory of affordances, as defined by J.J. Gibson (1989) and further explored by the situated perspective on cognition. Affordances, as defined by Gibson, refer to the offers, consistent in opportunities of interaction that the objects present in the environment in relation to the sensorimotor capacities of each species. The value and meanings of the affordances of the environment can be directly perceived; they are intrinsically part of the potential of objects themselves and are not constructed from the observer's momentary needs or intentions.

The work of Lakoff and Johnson (1999) metaphorically extends and projects the primary embodied experience towards the configuration of abstract/symbolic meaning. Such metaphorical extensions and projections are widely shared; they function as fundamental metaphors with which we think, rather than as metaphors we consciously construct. Drawing from Lakoff and Johnson, the properties of landscape could be interpreted as spatial patterns of containment, according to the precise manner through which they support our presence and ¨contain¨ our body, extending or projecting the embodied towards the metaphorical interpretations of the experience.

The work of Kaplan (1979) also permits the extension of the interpretation of atmosphere based on an automatic interpretation of these affordances as potentialities of action to the interpretation of structural patterns of information, such as complexity, mystery, coherence and legibility. These patterns, according to Kaplan, are linked to basic human purposes: making sense and involvement (Kaplan 1979). ¨While making sense refers to the concern to comprehend... involvement refers to the concern to figure out, to learn, to be stimulated. Nonetheless, knowing that an environment makes sense tells one nothing about whether it will be involving or not.¨ (Kaplan 1979:243). When people view a landscape, they are making a judgment, however intuitive and unconscious this process may be. This judgment concerns the sorts of experiences they would have, the ease of locomotion, of moving, of exploring in the environment they are viewing (Kaplan 1979). The perception of the environment implies its evaluation, and evaluation, in turn, elicits emotions and consequent tendencies of action, tendencies either to continue with what one is doing, or to withdraw, as the work of Antonio Damasio (1994) proposes. Affordances, spatial patterns of containment and complexity are thus proposed as basic activators of atmosphere.

The usefulness of distinguishing these dimensions is this: insofar as the word atmosphere denotes an immediate and intuitive response to the environment, it is important to ask how far its cartographic interpretations can work, not at a level of a reflexive understanding of atmosphere in terms of this response, but essentially in terms of its causes.
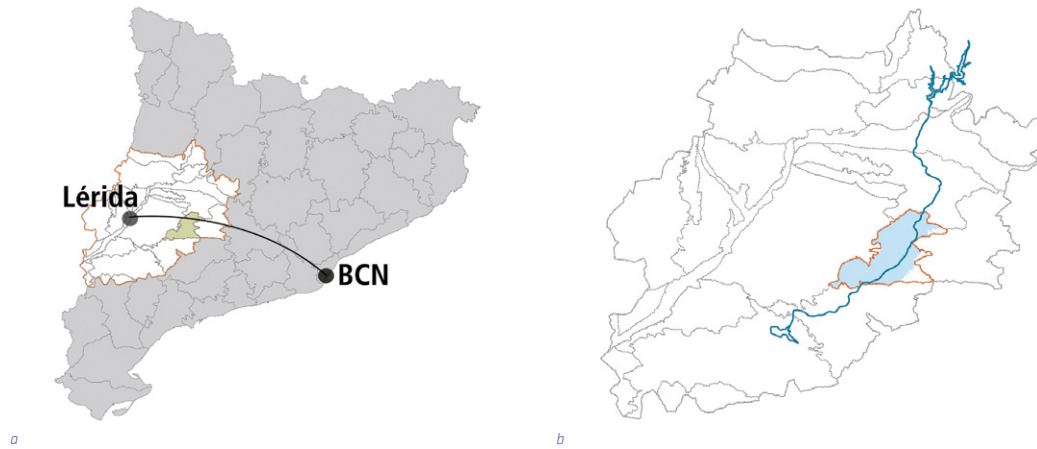
On-site testing

a

b

FIGURE 1 Situation of the landscape unit Secano de Belianes i de Ondara in the region of Lérida. Infrastructure corridor: Lérida-BCN and new irrigation channel crossing the landscape unit.

The site corresponds to the landscape unit of Secano de Belianesi de Ondara, as delimited in the Landscape Catalogue of Lérida region [3], an essentially plain [4], agrarian, ordinary landscape. Situated (Fig. 1) along a major infrastructure corridor connecting the city of Lerida with Barcelona and the Paris-Madrid TGV line, and in the midst of one of the most intensive productive agricultural landscapes of Catalonia, the area is subject to a radical change due to the implementation of the new irrigation channel of Segarra Garrigues. This channel potentiates the transformation of this dry landscape to an irrigated one with obvious consequences both to its function and to its image: a long, extended platform, covered by a seemingly uniform but complex geometric agricultural pattern (Fig.2), engages the body through a strong sense of ¨openness¨, only to be disrupted by rare details that capture the attention and, in a sense, deautomatize the perception, the majority of such details coming in the form of sparse topographical accentuations, and vegetated margins along the plot limits and the irrigation canals.
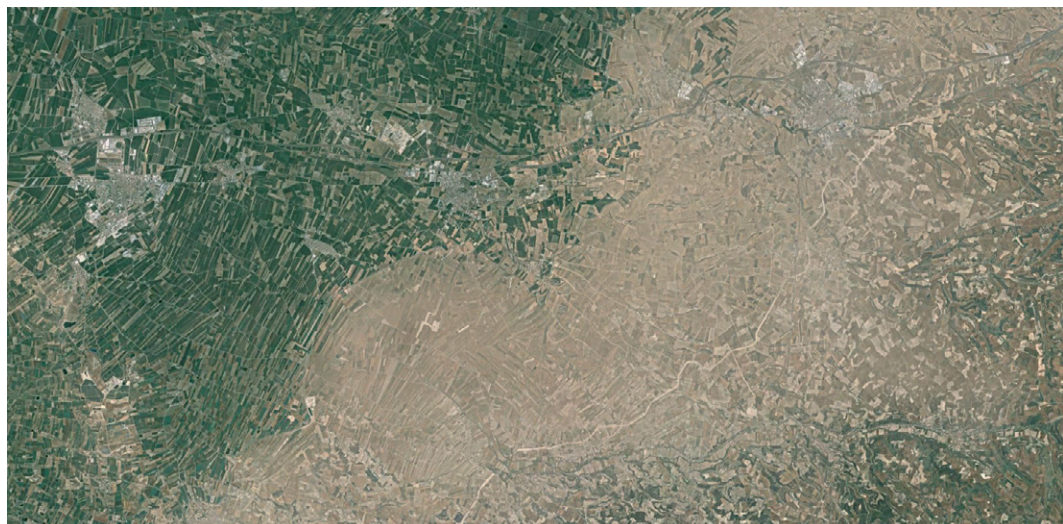

FIGURE 2 Agricultural patterns covering the plain of the landscape unit. (Map data: Google, Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya)

The deciphering of the underlying orders that form the particular character of this ordinary agricultural Mediterranean plain could be effectively reduced to the observation of a few common variables, such as those included in the planimetric and the topographic [5]. Nonetheless, as it will be argued, their cartographical interpretation acquires an extended meaning when concretized through their incision in the embodied experience, assigning value to landscape properties typically obviated at this scale of work.

Cartographic interpretations of the basic activators of atmosphere

 The approach to the activators of atmosphere, in terms of both affordances and spatial patterns of containment, begins with the morphological study of the topography. A generic classification of the slopes, which, at least in the field of spatial planning, generically includes the plain in a percentage of 0-5% (Fig. 3), which would represent the whole extension of the site as uniform. Nonetheless, a more meticulous analysis of the topography reveals a series of minimum slope changes, oscillating between 1.5 -3.5 % and corresponding to a series of topographic linear elements of variable thickness (Fig. 4).
These morphological boundaries form perhaps the most significant element of concreteness of this rural landscape (Fig. 5), both in terms of their effects in the geometrical configuration of the agricultural patterns and in the visual experience as the visibility studies reveal: These limits, although slight in relation to the scale of landscape but significant in relation to the scale of the human body, define the visual structure of this landscape and the degrees of visual exposure throughout this landscape (Fig. 7).

Through a similar approach, the analysis of the morphological structure of the plain also acquires an alternative meaning. Based on the reclassification of the habitats according to their potential visual and physical permeability, the agricultural plain is metaphorically interpreted in terms of rooms of a variable potential ¨domestic¨ use. Each one of these rooms offers a highly differentiated experience, horizontal fields occupied by rain-fed or irrigated herbaceous rooms, accessible grids configured through the olive and almond trees planted in the form of a matrix, as well as ¨corridors¨ formed between the linear structures that sustain the vineyards and the irrigated fruit crops (Fig. 6).

In this predominantly plain landscape, the definition of the limits of these rooms, either flat - as those covered by herbaceous vegetation - or three dimensional (Fig. 8), becomes highly important in the configuration of the experience, directly influencing the sense of evolvement of the landscape. These limits (Fig. 9), in the form of vegetated margins, topographic boundaries and dry stone walls, were manually mapped based on the 5000 aerial orthophotos, and classified according to their height and opaqueness as visual and physical barriers (Fig. 10).

Through observation, the above cartographic exercises permit, by means of their differentiated materiality and form, the understanding of the logic of the spatial patterns of containment of this landscape, according to the quality of the limits that define them: In the macro-scale, longitudinal transitional limits are traced between differentiated experiences, while, at the scale of immediate perception, vegetated margins, walls and slight changes of slope retain their perceptual attention. The attribution of value to these limits is analogous to the predominant openness of the plain (Fig.11). Functioning as lineal nodes of attraction of the gaze, these elements activate the perceptual attention in this flat landscape, locating the body in particular experiential niches.
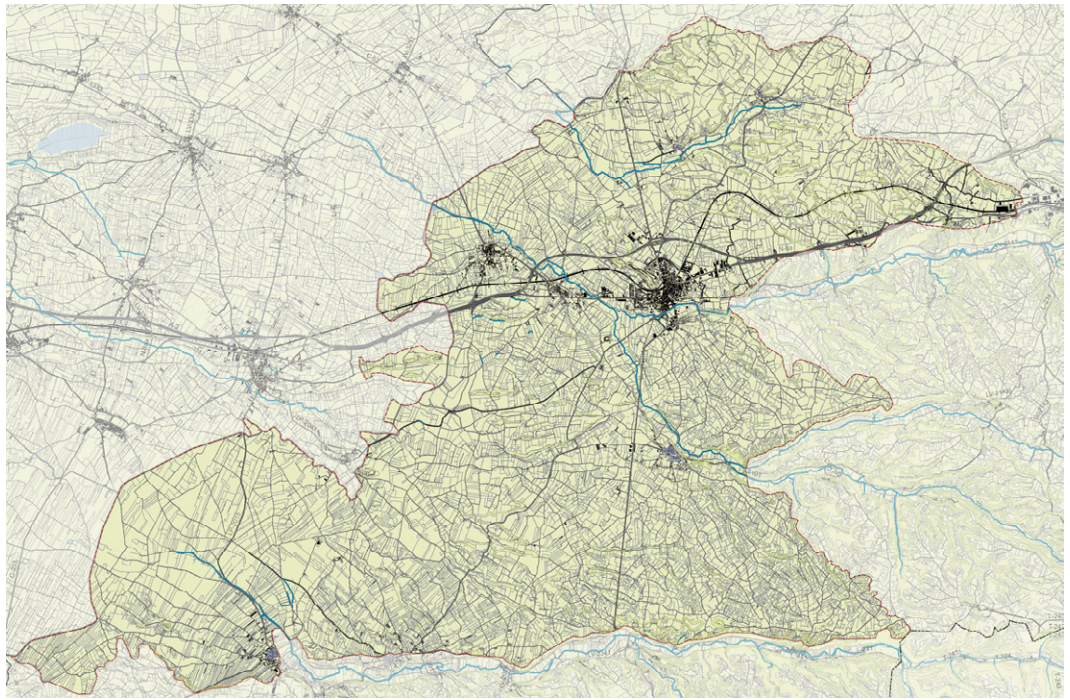
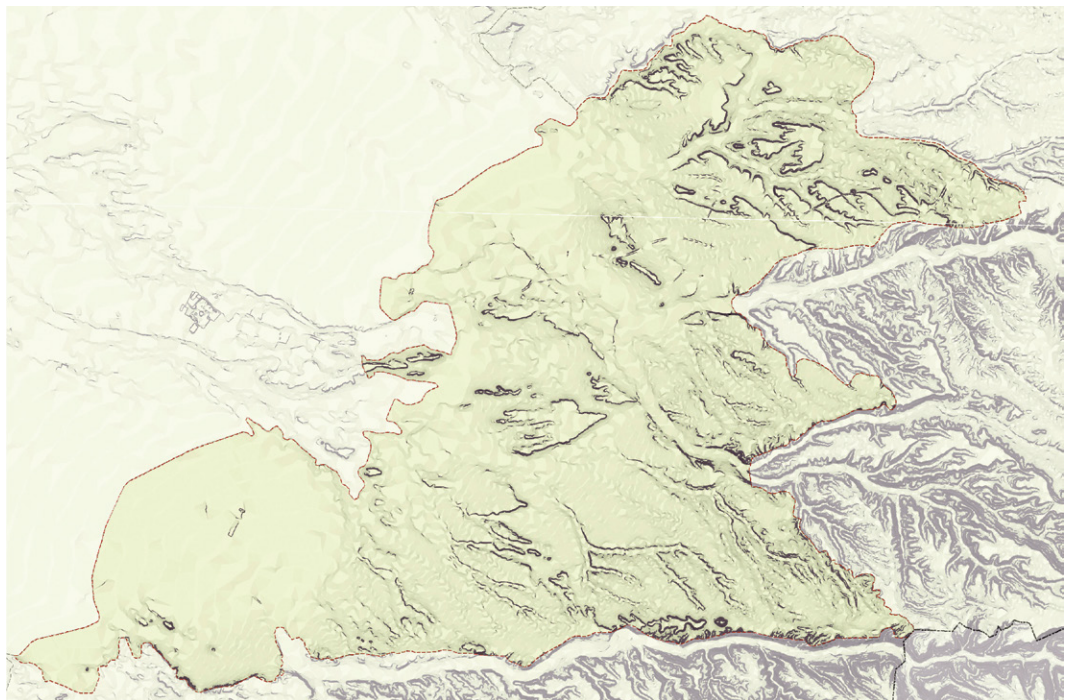FIGURE 3   Calculation of slopes from 0 to 5%

FIGURE 4   Calculation of slopes from 1.5 to 3.5%

FIGURE 5 Examples of morphological boundaries formed by slight changes of slope. (Map data: Google, Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya)

FIGURE 6 Aerial view of different rooms: olive trees along herbaceous horizontal fields. (Map data: Google, Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya)
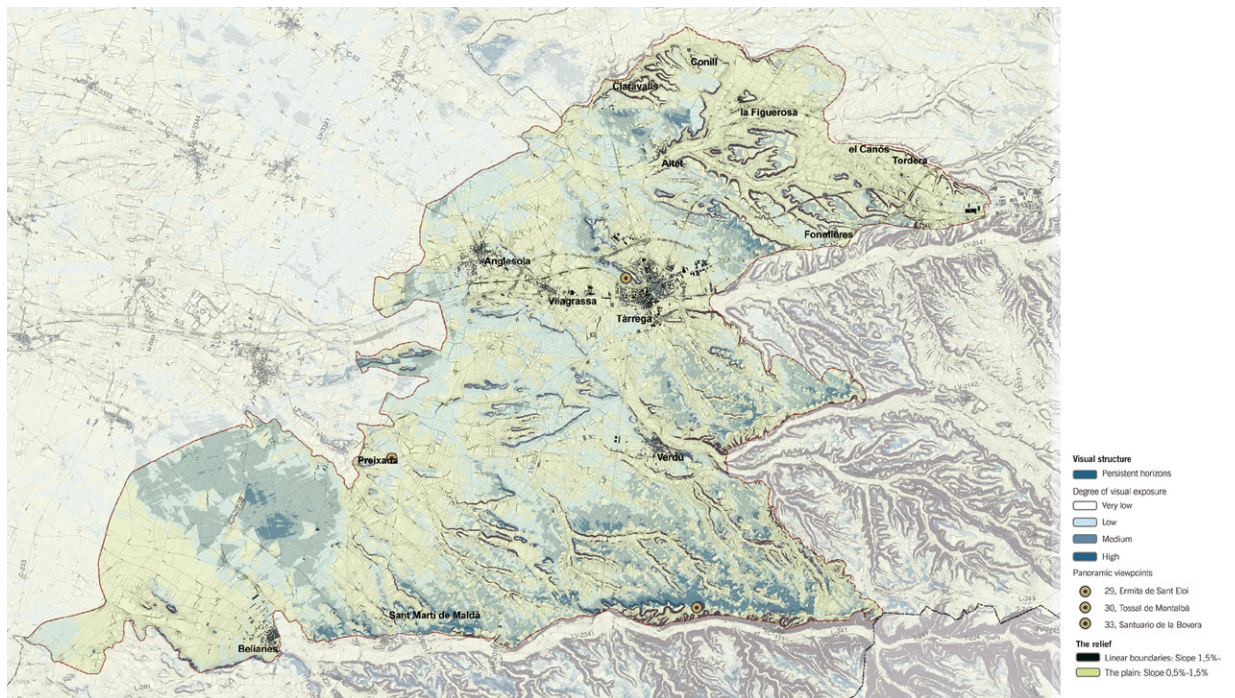
FIGURE 7 Visibility study showcasing the importance of the morphological boundaries in the perception of the landscape.
(The most visible areas are shown in blue).

Through observation, the above cartographic exercises permit, by means of their differentiated materiality and form, the understanding of the logic of the spatial patterns of containment of this landscape, according to the quality of the limits that define them: In the macro-scale, longitudinal transitional limits are traced between differentiated experiences, while, at the scale of immediate perception, vegetated margins, walls and slight changes of slope retain their perceptual attention. The attribution of value to these limits is analogous to the predominant openness of the plain (Fig.11). Functioning as lineal nodes of attraction of the gaze, these elements activate the perceptual attention in this flat landscape, locating the body in particular experiential niches.

This same structural flatness also enhances the perception of the multiple geometrical orders that draw the specificity of this landscape through a vast spectrum of lineal elements, such as plots, canals, and paths, forming relational patterns of variable orientations and densities throughout the territory. It is this particular syntax that it is related to the perceived complexity (Fig. 13) of the site, primarily configured through the interrelated networks of the irrigation channels and paths, which organizes the plain of agriculture.
This latter is decoded into differentiated agricultural patterns, revealed through the predominating orientation of the plots, others more sharp and legible while others seemingly more chaotic, nonetheless all adding density to the geometrical syntax of the site, also enriched by the lineal elements of topography, the dry stone walls, the vegetated margins and the three dimensional rooms of agriculture. This particular syntax is perceived not only in the form of discrete elements but also through the logic of their spatial distribution, revealing differentiated tendencies of compactness of the landscape grain (Fig. 12).

These grains help detect distinct morphological niches through this landscape, the sharpness of which also depends on their mutual influence, visual or physical, with other elements with which they potentially share a tense relationship (agriculture elements versus major road infrastructures or industrial sites) or a complementing character (paths, plots, small villages). These density mappings could be further interpreted thus as indicators for the degree of legibility and coherence of the landscape, an understanding that becomes more concrete through the observation of the previous mappings referring to the geometrical syntax of the site (Fig. 13).

FIGURE 8 Flat and three dimensional rooms.

FIGURE 9 Topographical boundaries, dry stone walls and vegetated margins.
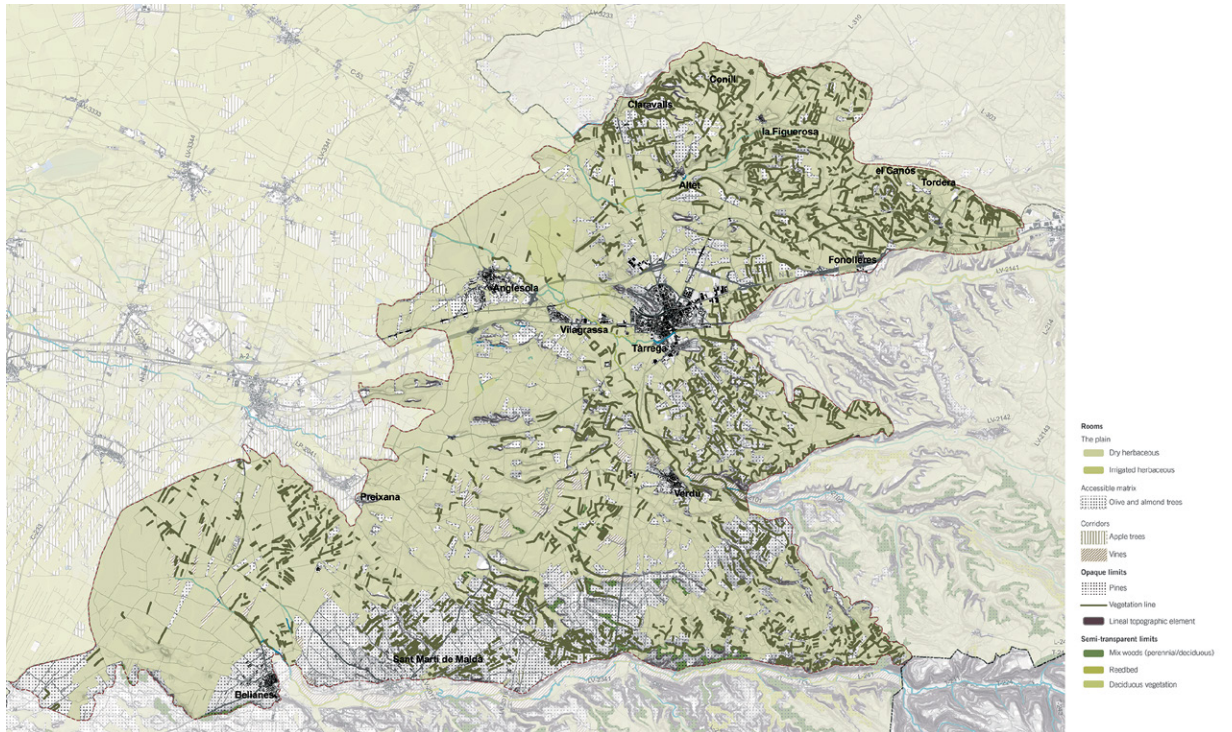
FIGURE 10 Cartographical interpretation of rooms and limits.
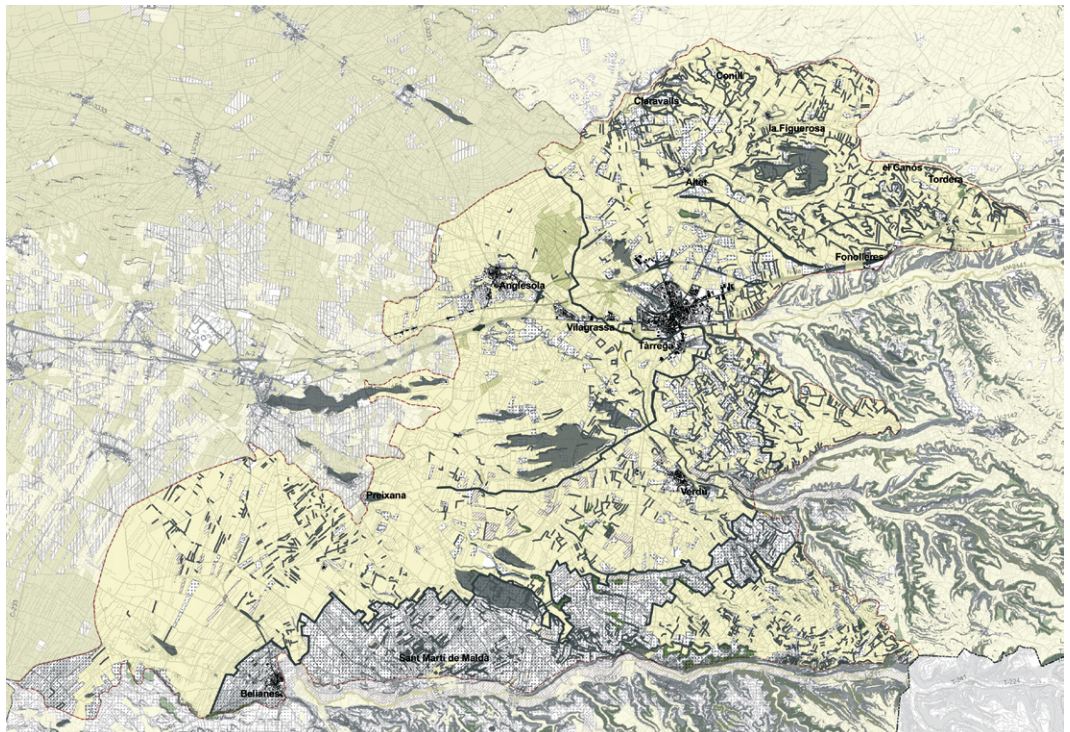
FIGURE 11 Spatial patterns of containment:limits as possible nodes of perceptual attraction.

a — Paths

b — Industrial

c — Buildings

d — Plots

e — Farms

f — Total
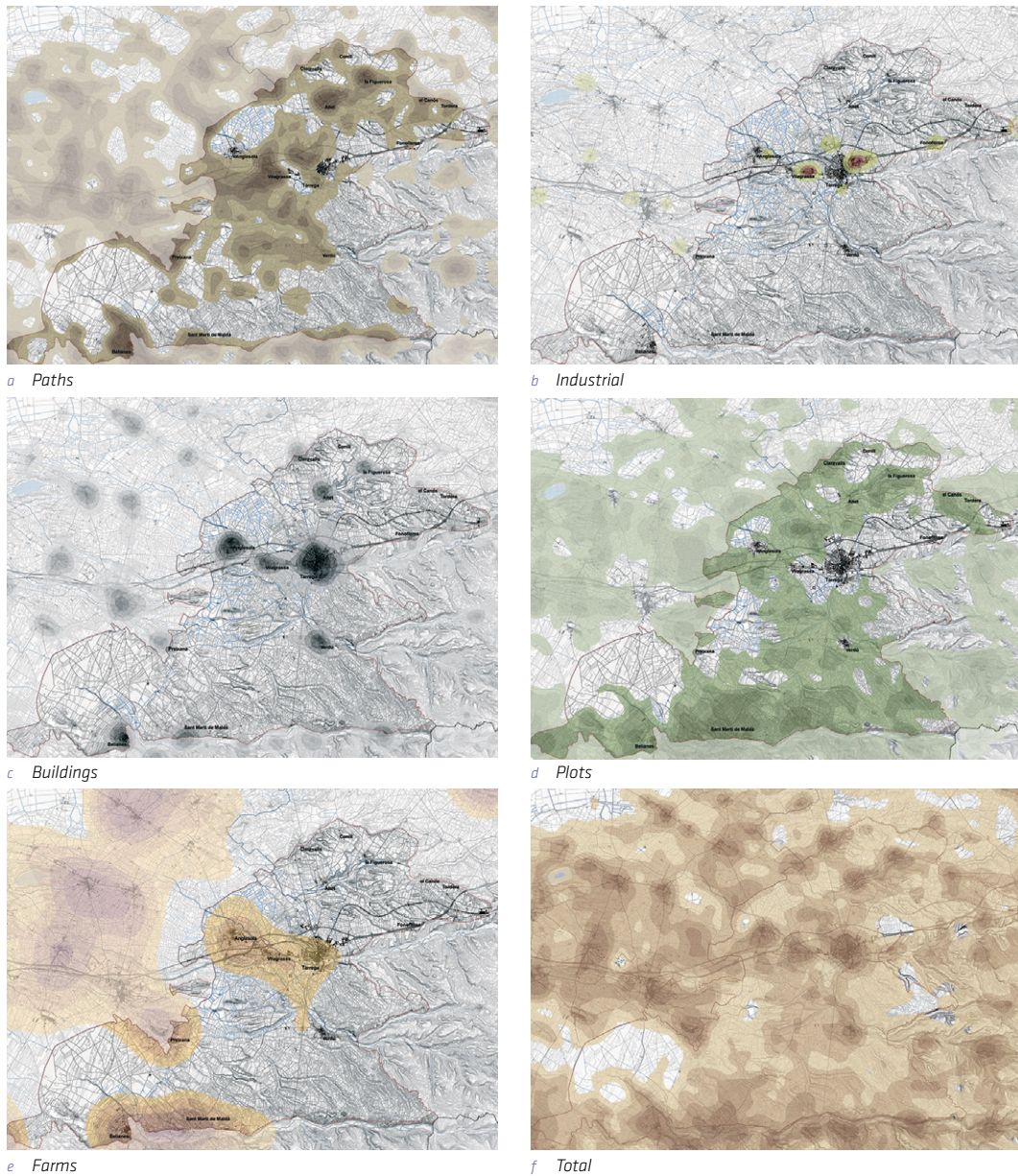
FIGURE 12 Spatial distribution and tendency of concentration of the main elements that configure this landscape: paths, plots and buildings. doi:10.7480/spool.2016.1.1101.g1495

From discrete to dense mapping

However suggestive any one of these cartographic insights on its own might be, the cartographic approach to the activators of atmosphere can only make sense through the patterns of relations configured between them, as in the moment of their embodied experience. This crossing (Fig. 14), proposes a synthetic interpretation of this landscape concretized not in the form of discrete elements but through the manner that spatial patterns formed among elements of distinctive morphological configuration situate the body

within them. The cartography slides towards a type of dense notation, where the meaning of each variable depends both on its precise form and on the spatial relations established with the rest of the elements, forming fields of variable densities (Fig. 15). This cartographic interpretation can hardly stand for a ¨global¨, unique pattern of atmosphere throughout the site: In a certain manner, the interpretation of atmosphere returns the attention to the perception as situated in a specific atmospheric nest, without implying a static understanding of the landscape.

This passage from discrete to dense representation points to an interpretation of the landscape through overlapping atmospheric nests that maintain their integrity while participating in multiple narratives spatially distributed in a virtual synchrony throughout the landscape. Although each nest could be analyzed in depth as a unique landscape pattern, the particularity, and consequently the understanding, of its value is enhanced through the relationship with its surrounding patterns. If, at this point, we were to define the sense of understanding of the particular that this mapping puts forward, at this scale of work, this would rely precisely on the characterization of the landscape as patterns of relations between distinct atmospheric niches. Value, on the other hand, can be assigned in terms of the quality of the potential narratives configured through the embodied, dynamic, sequential experience of these patterns. Moreover, a specific, intentionally designed sequence could add value to this landscape.

This analysis definitely questions the understanding of landscape as surface that can be divided into sharply defined sub-surfaces, or units more able to carry certain meanings or functional uses rather than others. On the contrary, it points to the proper meaning of landscape analysis as a vehicle for assessing how the territory can be transformed to re-orchestrate meanings and atmospheric intensities without sacrificing its specificity. In addition, this specificity cannot be revealed if we do not look into the complexity of the patterns of relations that form the structure of the landscape (Fig. 16).

FIGURE 13 Cartographical interpretation of the perceived complexity through geometry.

FIGURE 14 Synthetic interpretation of the crossing between the cartographical interpretation of the activators of atmosphere.
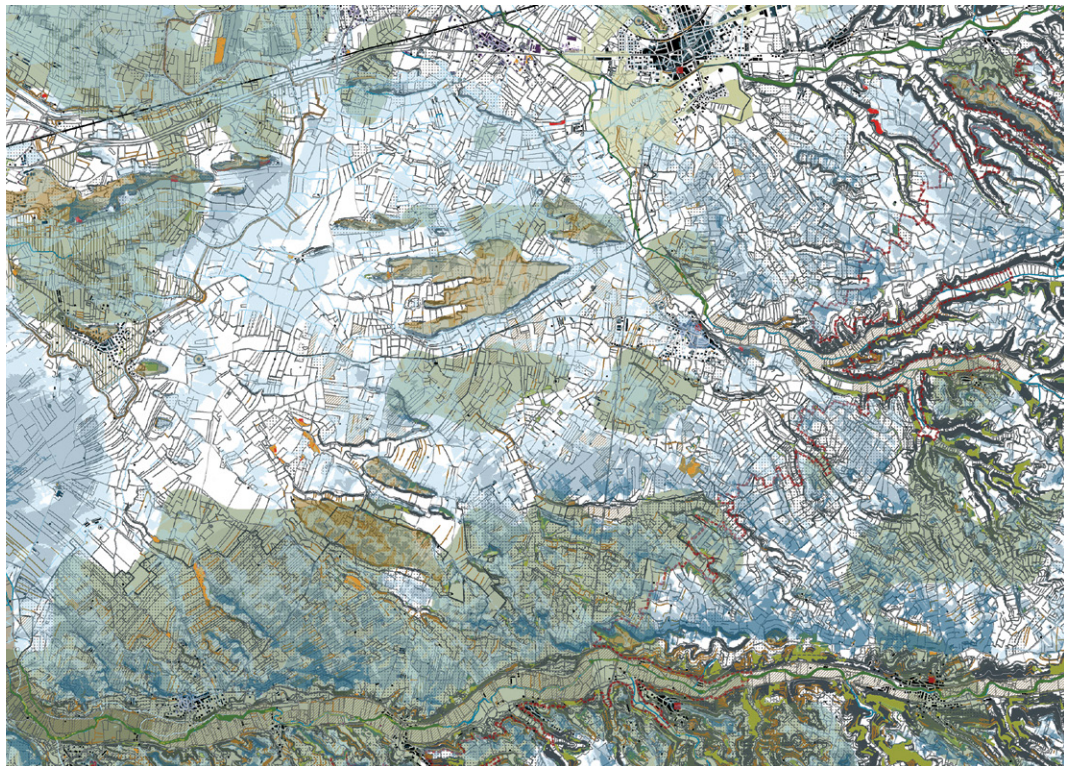doi:10.7480/spool.2016.1.1101.g1495

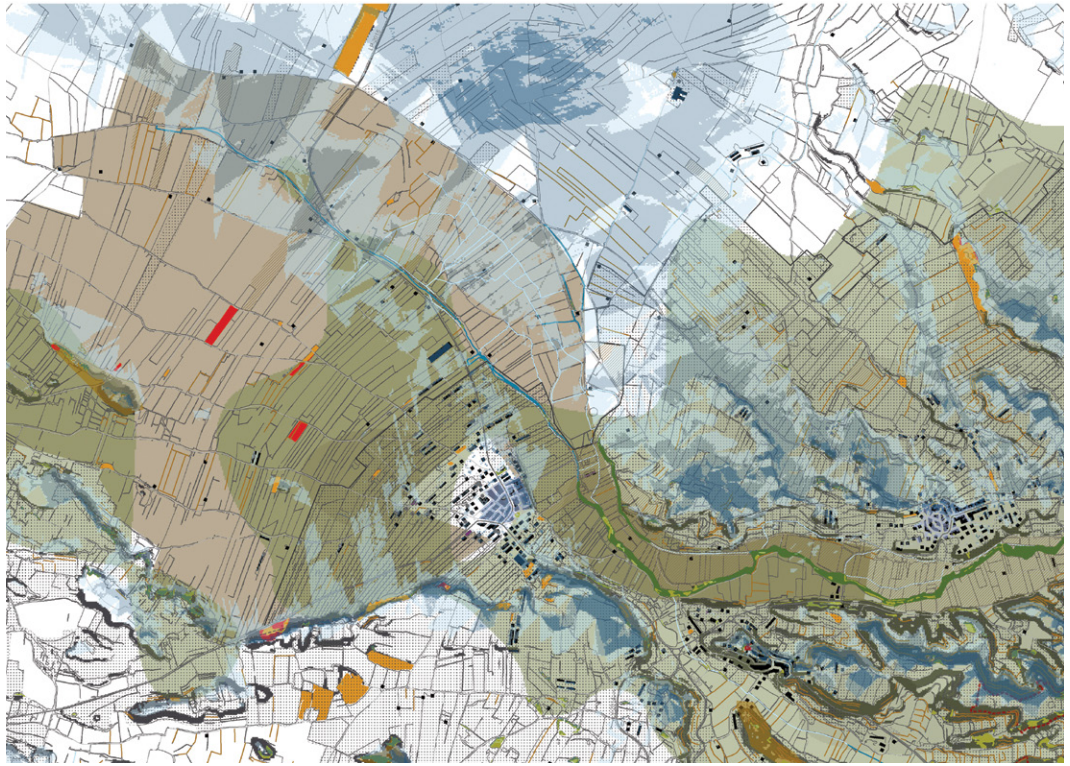FIGURE 15 Fields of variable densities of spatial relations between elements.

FIGURE 16 Densities as differentiated patterns of relations.
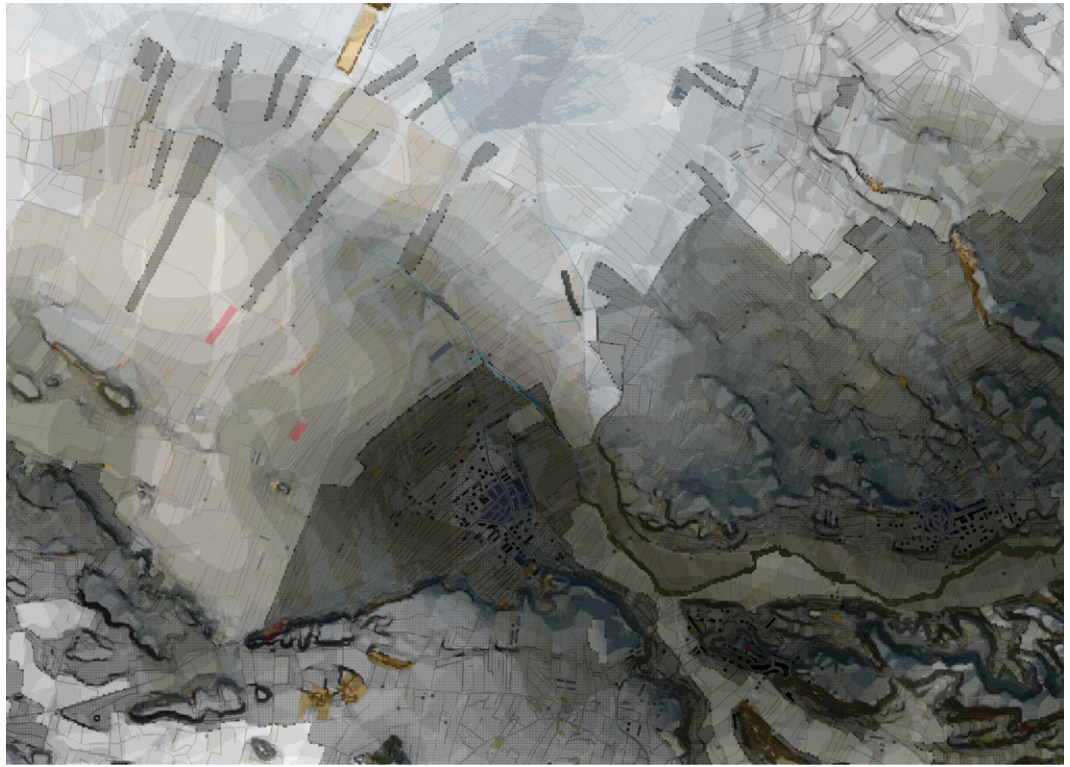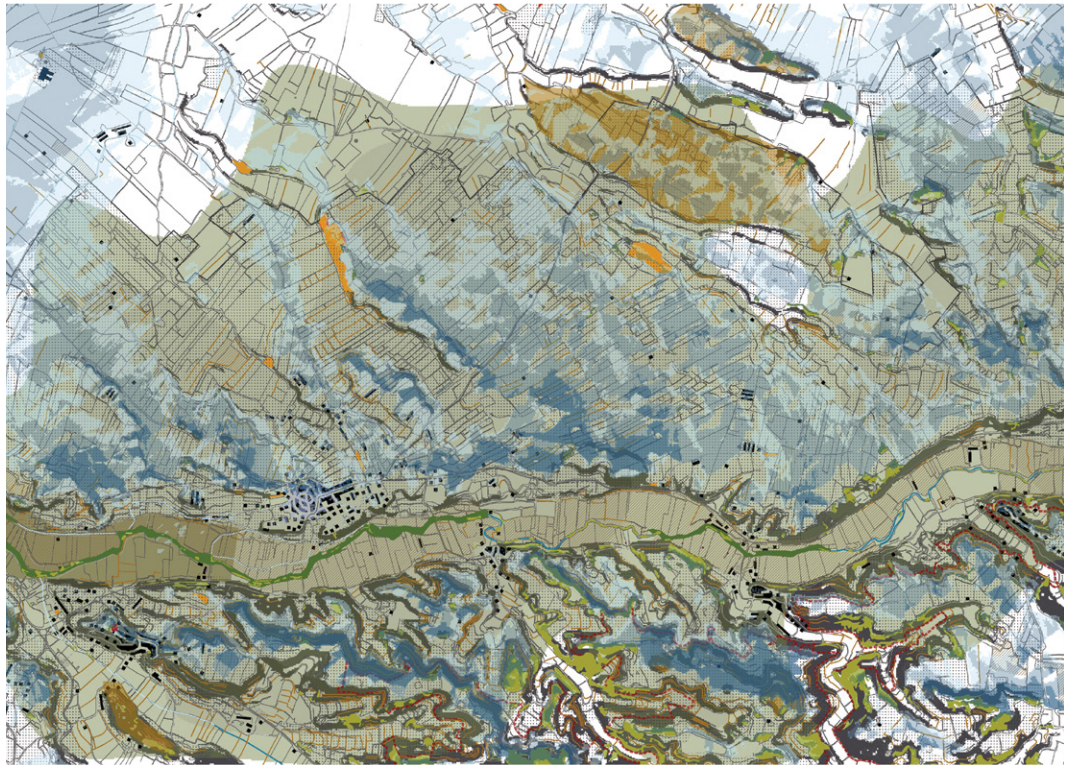

FIGURE 17 Idem.

FIGURE 18 Examples of the result of crossing of different scales (here: 1:50.000) and manual mapping

FIGURE 19 Examples of the result of crossing of different scales (here: 1:5.000) and manual mapping

Distinctiveness thus is based not only on the discreteness of the landscape elements, but also on the multiple densities formed by the interaction between elements as perceived through their embodied experience (Fig. 17). Densities, representing differentiated atmospheres, not only help us move beyond the idea of a clearly distinguishable landscape unit, but also beyond the idea of difference, electiveness and singularity as criteria for value: All landscapes have atmosphere, although they differ in the manner that they do so. Certain collections of distinct intensities can be localized and identified geographically (Fig. 17). Patterns seem to have a structure that is denser in certain areas and seemingly looser in others. Does this mean that the atmosphere in these areas of low density is experienced by the body as faded or loose?

Density must not be confused with the intensity of the experience. High density though could be interpreted as an indicator of an increased perceived complexity, based on the interaction of multiple landscape elements. On the other hand, low density could be linked with a higher grade of legibility. Nonetheless, this mapping does not directly reflect more or less valuable types of landscape units. Rather, it interprets some specific qualities of this landscape, based precisely on the relations configured between ¨atmospheric¨ densities, interrelated into a collage of multiple sequences of nesting patterns of atmosphere.

From scale to precision

In this interpretation of the landscape, the scale of the cartography interprets both the specificity of the form of the landscape elements with the necessary precision in order to reveal its significance to the embodied experience and the specificity of the spatial relations established between elements. By crossing data from databases of disparate scales (Fig. 18, 19), mapping data manually, these mappings seem to move beyond the typical cartographical constraints of precision in the scale of the territory towards the necessary precision in order to interpret the embodied experience of the landscape.

The mappings point towards an inter-scale approach, integrating two scales that are traditionally detached; the scale of the body and the scale of the territory, offering at least an alternative perspective to the traditional multi-scale approach. In the latter, the understanding of the landscape seems to follow a typical route: from big to small and vice versa, submitting the precision of the cartography to the ¨size¨ of the territory analyzed. Consequently, in the scale of the territory, the characterization of the values tends towards descriptions of landscape types that most probably provide generic descriptions of landscape character.

The projection of the embodied in the cartography on the other hand enhances an extended sense of the morphological analysis, landing the analytical eye on the perceptual ground of the landscape. Through this process, the cartography specifies, at local level, generic descriptions of the landscape that are inherently abstract and potentially trans-spatial: This dry-fed agricultural plain certainly shares various common elements with any other agricultural plain situated at similar geographic and atmospheric conditions. Nonetheless, its specificity is interpreted through the manner that the morphological attributes of these elements are concretized and interrelated on a particular site, as perceived through the embodied experience.

Conclusions

Cartographic exercises are more valuable for the arguments they endeavor to activate than for their finality as cartographic products in themselves. They are partial and selective, highlighting certain qualities of the landscape while overshadowing others, proposing a specific understanding of the particular:

The analytic attention balances between the quality of singular landscape elements and the relations configured among differentiated patterns of atmosphere. Affordances, spatial patterns of containment, and perceived complexity are proposed as complex variables to be interpreted through the cartography. This leads to the identification of potential nodes of activation of the perception and variable degrees of complexity and legibility of the landscape indicating the presence of particular places, inviting for their further characterization. In this process of approaching the particular at a scale of work that pretends to link landscape analysis with spatial planning, the mappings of atmosphere thus pave the way for the identification of intense experiential narratives, present or latent, to be configured through design, although not definitely delimiting precise units of distinct value.

Furthermore, by tracing associations between the body and the territory, they propose an enrichment of the morphological analysis of the landscape: In a way, the mappings of atmosphere, based on the processing of common cartographic data and tools, specify through a two dimensional representation understandings retrieved through the embodied experience of the site, driving cartography towards a more situated, experiential reading of the landscape.

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Notes

[1] This approach to cartography forms no exception to the prevailing tendency towards ¨objective¨ approaches to spatial analysis, inherited from modernist thinking and still profoundly influencing our understanding of space. Although postmodern critique traces the possibilities of alternative theoretical positions, advocating for more qualitative site-specific approaches (Harley,1989), the fact is that there is a lack of corresponding methodological tools of spatial analysis and design.

[2]   In Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture (1980), NorbergSchulz defines atmosphere as the manifestation of the
       character of place, where place stands for: "a totality made up of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture and
       colour. Together these things determine an 'environmental character' - or atmosphere - which is the essence of place."(Norberg Schulz,
       1980:8).

[3]   The author has participated, as member of the team of CRPPb (Centre of Landscape Research and Design of Barcelona integrated in
       the Department of Urbanism and Urban Planning, School of Architecture, Polytechnic University of Catalonia) in the drawing up of the
       Landscape Catalogue of Lerida.

[4]   Werner Nohl (2001) proposes ¨the plain¨ as a new category of landscape aesthetics, considering the contemporary dynamics influenc-
       ing agricultural landscapes:
       Looking at the areas of intensive agricultural production and other modern land uses, which will characterize large parts of our land-
       scape in the future, it might be useful to point to a fourth aesthetic category, relevant to landscape perception. In the following, the
       aesthetic quality of such areas will be called the ``plain''. Today, these areas belong to the aesthetically most unattractive landscapes.....
       In sum: plainness is a new visual experience, which is still waiting to be realized. (Nohl 2001:233)

[5]   As far as the databases used for the elaboration of the cartography are concerned, apart from the 5.000 scale topographic layer and
       planimetric map, we would like to highlight the importance of the layer of the habitats (50,000 scale). Although the term habitat re-
       fers mainly to an ecological function, it potentially offers accurate information about the quality of the morphological properties of the
       landscape. Furthermore, the linkage between atmospheric qualities derived from the morphological configuration of the habitats and
       the ecological perspective is of doubtless methodological interest. In terms of the software applied, the cartographic essays assume
       GIS for reinforcing a methodological process potentially shared through a commonly used cartography tool in the field of landscape
       architecture.

Identifying particular places through experimental walking

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Abstract

Experimental walking can be used to identify particular places, design strategies and spatial visions for urban landscapes. Walking designers can explore sites and, in particular, their temporal dynamics and atmospheric particularities – both essential elements in making particular places. This article illustrates the benefits of this method, using the changing German city of Freiburg as an example.

Key words

experiment, transformation, walking, specifics, dynamic landscapes

Introduction

The sustainable transformation of urban landscapes relies on design processes that carefully identify particular places, notably their dynamic qualities that can be used as a starting point for designs. In Freiburg, identifying, representing and interpreting particular places was a crucial part of the project "Perspektivplan" because the strategic designs for the cityscape were supposed to express, reflect and develop distinctive dynamic elements of the city.

WHERE? Freiburg

FIGURE 1 Freiburg – a growing city. The housing market is extremely tight because approximately 1,000 new jobs (net) have been created per year since 2009 and little available space is left within the citiy`s boundaries. (Photograph by cityförster, freiwurf, Stein+Schultz, 2015)

Freiburg is a hugely popular, medium-sized town with an attractive proximity to France and Switzerland. The famous Black Forest on its doorstep, and tourists and inhabitants cherish the surrounding landscape (Fig. 1). Freiburg has been facing specific pressures for years, though. The housing market is extremely tight because around 1,000 new jobs (net) have been created per year since 2009 and people from all over the world are moving to Freiburg. The project "Perspektivplan" was an informal, large-scale design study, intended to creatively approach the following questions: What are distinctive places of the urban landscape? What is their role in a resilient fabric of the future city? What are the roles of open spaces, dynamic elements and historic aspects in a growing city?

For the city of Freiburg, this project is nothing less than a radical change in direction. After years of focusing on the development of new neighbourhoods like world-famous Vauban, it began a process of rethinking the fabric of the whole urban landscape, including inner city areas, neighbourhoods and villages, infrastructure and forests. The project aimed to identify hotspots of transformation and find a spatial vision and spatial strategies to function as inspiring guidelines for the process of restructuring the city. The existing zoning plans had not been able to provide such inspiration because they aimed to regulate rather than to identify dynamic places and formulate spatial visions.

The design team comprised different professions: an urban designer (Oliver Seidel, Cityförster), an architect (Sanna Richter) and two landscape architects (Henrik Schultz, Stein+Schultz and Börries von Detten, freiwurf). They worked closely with municipal planners and different groups of decision makers and stakeholders (Fig. 2).

FIGURE 2 Different groups were involved in the process: decision makers, stakeholders, administrative bodies and the interested public, all contributing to a co-creative process of planning and design. (Photograph by City of Freiburg, 2016)

WHAT? Sensing the city, identifying places

During an exploration phase of three months, the design team walked the project area extensively searching for particular places and spatial elements that had not been portrayed in books and plans, and cannot be defined by generating quantitative data.

For instance, the design team bodily experienced the atmospheric effects of the large streets that cut through the city (Fig. 3). They appear as barriers in the city's fabric, prohibiting people from freely roaming the city. These streets are particular elements of Freiburg´s fabric. They had been taken for granted throughout the last decades, but in line with the city's mobility transition and inspired by bodily sensing their dominance, the design team questioned the privileges of these large transport axes.

FIGURE 3 Large transport axes are typical in Freiburg today. They had been taken for granted throughout the last decades, but in line with the city's mobility transition and inspired by bodily sensing their dominance, the design team questioned their privileges. (Photograph by cityförster, freiwurf, Stein+Schultz, 2015)

With the "Capture" strategy (Fig. 4), the team proposed ways of transforming the streets into usable open spaces and occupying unused roadside greenery by building new soundproof houses with backyards protected from noise. As a result, the formally hierarchical transport axes can become part of the city's fabric, play diverse roles, and no longer appear as barriers.

a   b
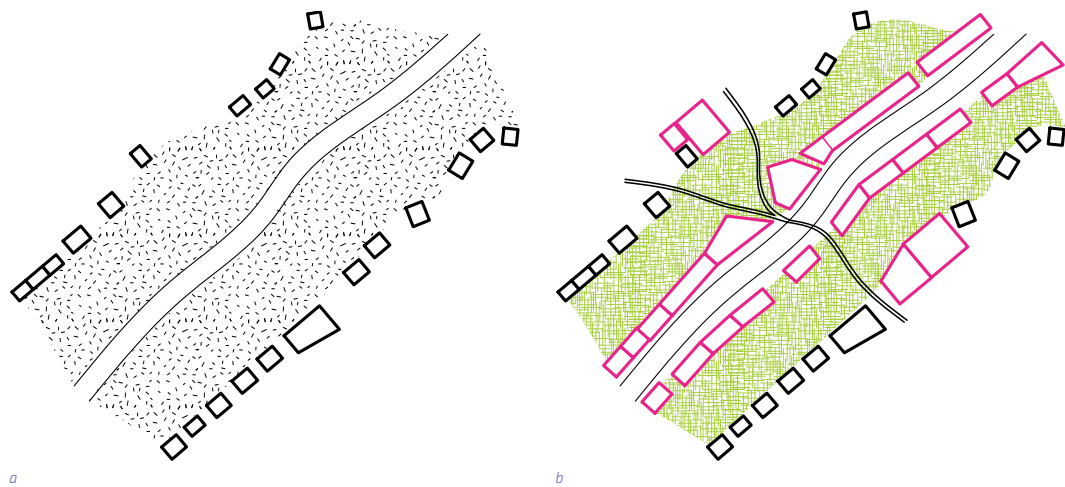
FIGURE 4 Strategy "Capture": With the "Capture" strategy, the team proposed ways of transforming the streets into usable open spaces and occupying unused roadside greenery by building new soundproofed houses with backyards protected from noise. (Diagram by cityförster, freiwurf, Stein+Schultz, 2015)

While walking, the design team experienced places that offer an opportunity to grasp the city in its beautiful, unfolding complexity. The team mapped these places, traces and patterns of movement (e.g. paths used by people as part of their daily routines), landmarks and other characteristic elements of Freiburg's cityscape that can only be experienced by walking the city (Fig. 5). The sketches represent narrative qualities of certain places and of the whole city of Freiburg.

a   *b*
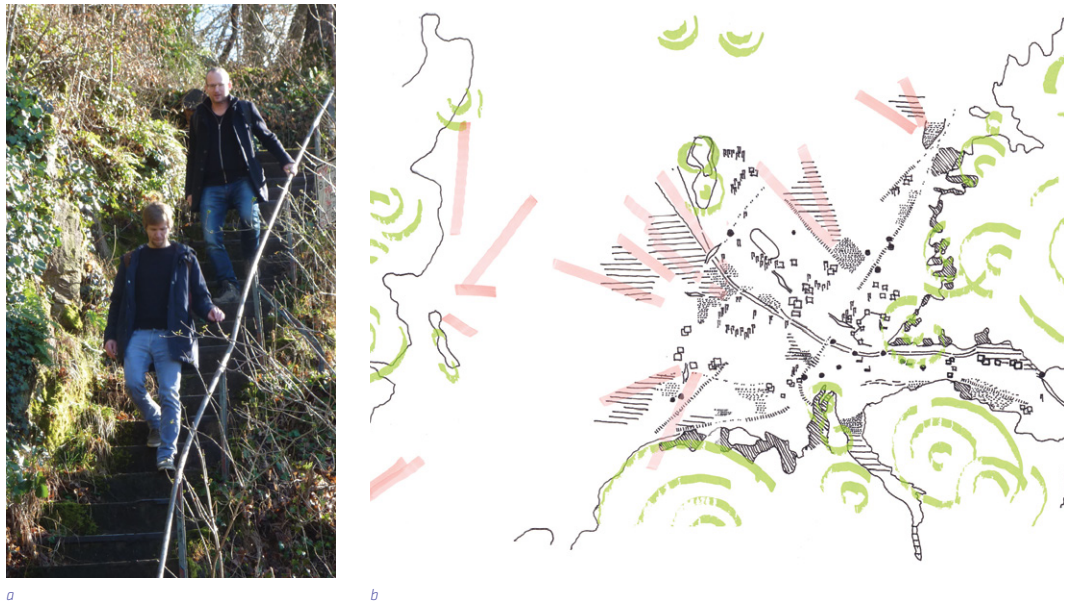
FIGURE 5   Walking and Mapping: Understanding Freiburg´s fabric by exploring sites. (Photograph, Diagram by cityförster, freiwurf, Stein+Schultz, 2015)

Walking the city of Freiburg helped to identify particular places with potential for restructuring and reprogramming. For example, informal open spaces on Freiburg's fringes that are shaped by individual appropriation of neighbourhood initiatives offer unique development opportunities (Fig. 6).

FIGURE 6   Particular places` "Informal edge" can be framed as areas of free appropriation, preventing tabula rasa strategies (Photograph by cityförster, freiwurf, Stein+Schultz, 2015)

In existing formal plans, these sites are not marked. Designing the city of Freiburg without walking it and rooting out these places would mean missing the chance to work with these specific potentials. The strategy "SEAM" proposes ways of working with the particularities of these informal sites, for example by framing areas of free appropriation and preventing tabula rasa strategies (Fig. 7).

a

b
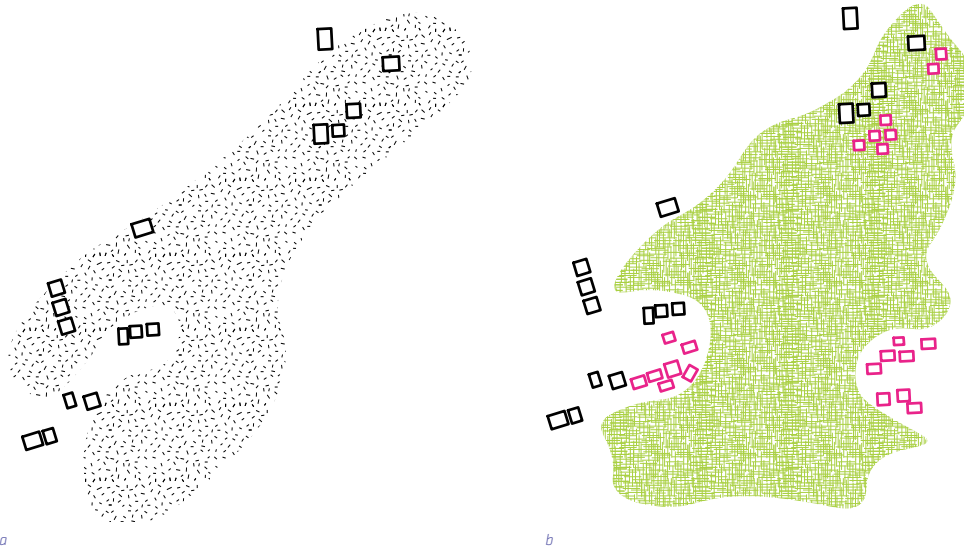
FIGURE 7 The strategy "Seam" proposes ways of working with the particularities of these informal sites. (Diagram by cityförster, freiwurf, Stein+Schultz, 2015)

a

b

c

d
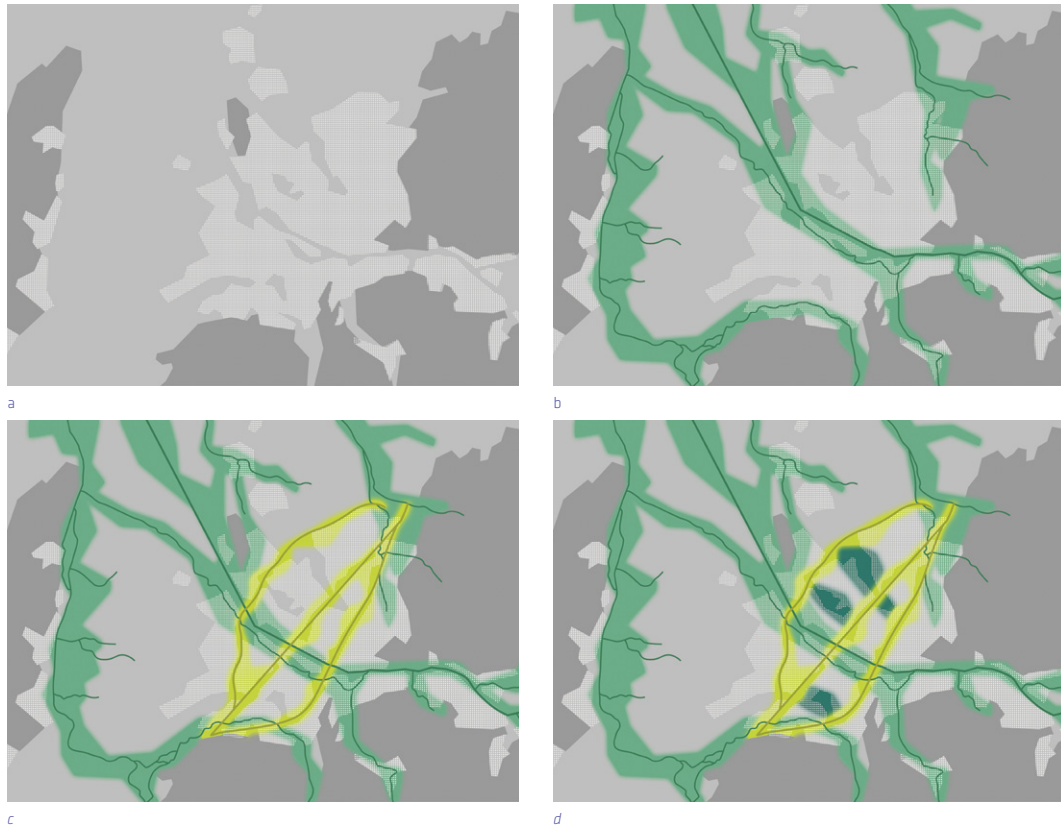
FIGURE 8 The new framework shown in the spatial vision can be divided in three fields. The first, "riverscapes", addresses areas along the three major floodplains. Each new project in these areas must define its relation to the river. Riversides will be transformed from small, and in some places inaccessible, strips of green to a river park. The second field, "cross connections" follows today's linear intermediate spaces that will be transformed into dense, multi-layered hotspots of urban life. The streets themselves will be important elements of public space. They are designed to be multidimensional spaces. The third field is called "urban glades". These glades are parks and other green spaces, including an airfield, which will be kept open to provide expansive views of the cityscape and places to linger and breathe. (Diagrams by cityförster, freiwurf, Stein+Schultz, 2016)

The walking design team in Freiburg was able to feel the city's "vibe", to understand how particular dynamic elements interact, and to conceive of the city as a whole – as a living ecosystem. Experiencing the atmosphere, interacting with people, feeling the summer heat (Freiburg has one of the hottest microclimates in Germany), mapping particular places such as the large streets and the informal spaces on the fringes, and bodily sensing "where the music plays" – all these experiences were crucial to inventing a proper spatial vision for the whole of Freiburg, as well as tangible interventions (Fig. 8).

HOW? The walking-method

To prepare the walks in Freiburg, the design team defined guidelines such as to walk parts of every neighbourhood of the city, to walk large sequences alone and in silence, to engage with the landscapes, and to enjoy being part of the landscape performance.

The nature of walking itself can be viewed as experimental (Fischer, 2011: 289). In this context 'experimental' means an act or operation for the purpose of discovering something unknown, in this case particular places and the characteristics of Freiburg as a whole. To walk as an experiment means to intervene and change the object of design and research. Rebecca Solnit calls walking not an analytical but an improvisational act (Solnit, 2000: 21). In walking experiments, a given framework fosters creative engagement and combines planned and unplanned elements (Seggern, 2000: 316). The character of a walking experiment can best be described by quoting Bruno Latour: "A good experiment is not one that offers some definite knowledge, but one that has allowed the researcher to trace the critical path along which it will be necessary to pass so that the following iteration will not be carried out in vain" (Latour, 2004: 196). Thus, experimental walking in Freiburg could not fail. In fact, it was rather a question of whether walks could be on these critical paths to identify particular places.

An additional experimental aspect in the context of planning and design in Freiburg was that walks were considered a kind of play. Playfulness means avoiding constant reflection, i.e. by not asking questions such as "What am I doing here?" and by trusting one's intuition when, for example, choosing paths or places to pause. The rules of the game are clear and simple; they guide walking designers and allow them to open up to the unexpected:

1   walk the whole day;
2   choose a direction rather than 'the right path';
3   experiment with following beaten tracks and with crossing the terrain by following a straight line;
4   walk alone most of the time, at least for half of your journey;
5   start a conversation with people you encounter on the way;
6   observe places with all their scents, flavours, views and textures;
7   open up to the landscape, play walking.

The rules were not intended to restrain the walkers. In fact, they were designed to work as guidelines. The team members made use of the opportunity to break or change the rules. These rules resulted from previous experiences of walking in research and in practical projects (Schultz, 2014). Walking is one of the most ordinary and simple ways of exploring landscapes. However, applied to design practice, it must

be refined as an experimental method supporting a complex creative process of gathering knowledge, generating ideas, and reflecting and sharing findings immediately on site (Fig. 9).
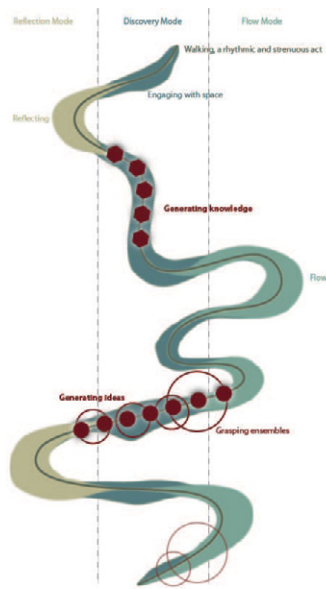
In order to do this, the method provides a set of rules to help inspire the interplay of intensive perception, intuition and reflection. In recent research, three modes were crystallised that are supported and integrated by the method: the 'discovery mode', the 'flow mode', and the 'reflective mode' (Schultz, 2014). The characteristic elements of the act of steady, long-lasting walking—strain, rhythm and intensive perception—enable these three modes. Bound together in the act of walking they facilitate engagement (allowing researchers to intensively perceive space), flow (encouraging intuition), and reflection (supporting organisation). Therefore, a walk can stimulate the complex, iterative process of large-scale landscape design that can also be a process of transformative science. Designers of large-scale landscapes, as well as researchers, need to engage in order to explore the object of research. Sometimes, they want their thoughts to stray and to experience flow in order to stimulate associations and new interconnections. Finally, they want to reflect both their experiences and initial ideas.

How can walking as an experimental method help to identify, interpret and design particular places? Today, landscape designers can draw from the widespread use of walking in other professions. First, there is social scientist Lucius Burckhardt's and his research on 'strollology'. Burckhardt's focus was on walks as a tool to perceive a space and to establish a critical attitude towards landscape planning (Burckhardt, 2006: 259). Though he did not focus on the ties between walking and the design process, Burckhardt influenced designers, including landscape architects, and pointed to the 'invisible' aspects of landscape (Fezer and Schmitz, 2012). His walks provided a way to analyse urban fabric and to identify pivots. Second, authors like Ian Sinclair have touched upon the experience of walking in relation to urban landscape, for example, in his stories on the urban fringe in his book 'London Orbital' (Sinclair, 2005). Third, there is a growing number of performative artists making walking and identifying particular places a constitutive element of their work. Boris Sieverts, for example, combines paths, situations and views, and creates sequences of images while walking. He identifies particular places and connects them. Participants in his tours are guided to experience these places as part of a newly written landscape story. Fourth, there are geomorphologists. The researcher Sven Lukas, for example, walks to understand how glaciers grew. Walking helps Lukas capture the

complexity of a landscape and its genesis. On his walks he identifies particular spatial constellations (Lukas & Bradwell ,2010).

With an inspiring set of rules landscape designers can apply walking as a method. But, what exactly is the outcome?

WHAT FOR? Understanding, ideas and critical engagement

The case study of Freiburg reveals the benefits of experimental walking as an element of large-scale landscape design. To understand the outcomes, one has to realise what informal large-scale landscape design aims for. The process of designing is understood as a process of understanding (Seggern, 2008) and of transformation (Diedrich, 2013). That does not necessarily imply that something should be constructed, but rather to create knowledge that informs different groups of people when realising projects. The spatial vision in Freiburg provides guidance for everyday decisions made by people of different professional backgrounds.
Landscape in this context is considered to have come into being through a complex, non-linear process of transformation. The European Landscape Convention builds on this concept of landscape: according to article 1A, 'landscape' means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. People play a constitutive part by perceiving, using and altering the landscape both physically and in their minds. According to Hille von Seggern's definition of landscape as 'Raumgeschehen', all space that surrounds us can be understood only by actively becoming part of and perceiving its on-going process of transformation (Seggern, 2008). While walking, people physically interact with the world, not as subjects upon objects, but by being a part of it, as also theorised by phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).

The fact that walkers can become part of the Raumgeschehen, and intensively perceive and change it, makes walking a process of understanding that helps to create knowledge (Seggern, 2008: 233). Walkers explore what is already there, immediately creating and thus changing this 'reality' by walking through it and connecting particular places and elements in their minds and with their bodies, and by reflecting on the insights gained. In this process of understanding, a crucial outcome of the simple act of walking is ideas. Only referring to rational strategies cannot produce ideas. Intuitional and bodily strategies are also needed. Walking is a bodily activity and the creative processes described by many different people are based on intuition (Schultz, 2014b: 129). Walking rhythmically merges the motion of the body and the lines of thought. It merges perception, physical challenge, and rhythmic movement. Thus, it brings perception and flow together, creating an interplay that is well suited to generating new ideas.

In Freiburg, the walks led to particular places and ideas for the whole urban landscape. Sensing and understanding the city as a dynamic landscape helped generate stark images that balance productive fuzziness and offer tangible starting points for new projects. New interconnections, for example, along and across the transport axes and at the urban fringe became an important element of the spatial vision. The walks helped to identify sequences experienced when moving through the city, windy "urban glades" with expansive views, and intermediate spaces between neighbourhoods. The walking design team experienced these particular places that offer opportunities for transforming, restructuring and reprogramming. The designers could respond to the qualities experienced on the walks when designing and

discussing the spatial vision and spatial strategies. They could easily oscillate between abstract vision for the whole and particular places.

It is a crucial finding, though, that working with particularities does not mean protecting and conserving them, but rather using them as a starting point for a distinctive design. In the case of informal spaces at the city´s edge, this implies working with the initiatives to transform and maintain the sites in a sustainable way, and giving green spaces status as part of Freiburg's green grid. In the case of mapped landmarks, a strategy would not only imply respecting existing points of orientation but creating new ones and integrating them into the Freiburg's unique topology.

The fact that almost everybody is capable of walking makes the method a low-threshold activity. This is a crucial quality because it fosters the generation of 'socially robust knowledge' of Mode 2 research (Nowotny et al. 2001: 166). In Freiburg, walking fostered a special form of reflection in action. While walking the city, phases of engagement alternated with those of looking at the landscape from a distance. At one stage, the designers intensively perceived the atmosphere of a space and became part of the landscape. At another stage, they looked at the landscape from a distance and were inspired to reflect their findings. The knowledge generated during a walk was often implicit but it could be shared among other designers and members of the general public. Such sharing, when done right away and on site – for example when walking with others – can help make knowledge explicit. In other words, while walking, researchers can practise reflection in action (Schön, 1984: 76ff).

Conclusions

Experimental walking is a method of finding paths to particular places and ideas. In Freiburg, the walking method helped to understand the urban landscape, design a spatial vision for the urban fabric and come up with spatial strategies. Walks are also occasions for critical assessment of streets and routes through the city, both important elements of cities that can be transformed by its moving inhabitants.

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Big cities – 'quiet places'

tracing relationships between material and immaterial qualities of urban spaces

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Abstract

This paper investigates the theme particular places from the perspective of 'quiet places', by examining potential links between material and immaterial qualities of four distinct typologies of urban spaces in the landscape metropolis, and offering five thematic lenses to sharpen our view for the particular. While the relationship between green spaces and restorative qualities for humans has long been acknowledged, the present research investigates other types of urban spaces, not focusing on 'green' or dB ratio as such but instead on confluences of soundscape, cityscape, flowscape, and other 'scapes' i.e. 'material-immaterial landscapes' in particular places in the two cities. This kind of particularity is an under-researched field also in methodological terms. We therefore set up a survey, in which we asked people about their appreciations of various material and immaterial qualities of the place; the conceptualisation of which derived partly from a pilot study and partly from a structured literature review. The responses revealed noticeable differences between the four typologies and less between similar types in the two cities. The results of the survey also showed a variety of expressions, deepening our understanding of the experienced qualities and simultaneously opening up for a new vocabulary addressing this interaction and its importance for 'quiet places', discussed in relation to methodological considerations.

Keywords

Introduction

On a global scale, there is a strong focus on sustainable urban development. In European countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands, the compact city is regarded as a sustainable city model as it provides a good framework for energy efficiency and high service levels (e.g. OECD, 2012). Because the quality of the urban environment is essential for its success, it makes sense to study the perceived qualities of dense urban environments, not only in terms of physical and functional parameters but also in terms of immaterial qualities such as flow, rhythm, aesthetic experience, and resonance.

Over the past decades, relationships between green spaces and restorative qualities have been thoroughly investigated (e.g. Ulrich et al., 1991; Kaplan, 1995; Grahn & Stigsdotter, 2010; Peschardt, Stigsdotter & Schipperijn, 2016). In a classic study, Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis & Gärling (2003) found natural settings more restorative than urban settings; however, this study used relatively unattractive urban settings in contrast to the natural environments. The restorative effects of water in natural and urban settings have attracted research attention, and were found by White, Smith, Humphryes, Pahl, Snelling & Depledge (2010) to elicit positive reactions in both urban and natural settings. Studies of the restorative potential of urban spaces are more scarce (though see e.g. Marselle, Irvine, Lorenzo-Arribas, Warber (2015), who are, however, mainly concerned with health effects of walking in urban green spaces). These studies derive from a raft of literature, branching out from ecosystem services and environmentalism.

According to findings from the WHO, noise is regarded as a major environmental cause of health problems in cities (WHO, 2011). Policy efforts focus on reducing noise levels along functionalistic planning principles, e.g. by designating 'Quiet Areas' in green settings within the urban environment, or in natural settings (Environmental Noise Directive, directive 2002/49/EC). Liveability thus, is studied from a natural sciences perspective, focusing on dB ratio levels and dealing with health and preferences, rather than identifying and conceptualising crucial, yet difficult to capture, immaterial qualities.

In contrast, the present study uses the concept of 'quiet places' to identify places in which one feels an inner quietness and feels aligned with the environment; places in which the environment feels stimulating and helps recharge one's energy, places in which the rhythm of the city feels positive. Such a deeper connection and expansive 'oneness' with the environment, which stimulate an inner 'quiet place', an inner climate, and allow us to move beyond the linearity of everyday life and expand beyond the restrictions of Euclidian three-dimensionality, is often acknowledged in relation to natural environments. In this paper we therefore explore the perceived balancing and uplifting qualities of urban environments and how the concept of 'quiet places' may add to the theme of particular places.

The core of our interest is the interlinkage between material and immaterial qualities of urban places. Our objective is to study the phenomenon of quiet places, and to develop methods for this purpose. We seek to identify interlinkages between place characteristics and their perceived value as 'quiet', by outlining four urban types and investigating their various immaterial qualities as perceived by their users, which point to potential links between material and immaterial aspects. Bringing together elements from the humanities and the social sciences, we combine a literature review, which highlights a number of theoretical themes, with analysis of data deriving from an on-site questionnaire survey and data from semi-structured interviews in eight cases from Amsterdam and Copenhagen.

We hypothesise that there will be a difference in the findings between the types as well as between the two cities.

Themes for material and immaterial qualities

Since the 1990s, the basic understanding of a place as a locality in space carrying meaning for somebody (Relph, 1976; Cresswell, 2004), providing attachment for humans (Tuan, 2002), and being defined by urban built structures (Lynch, 1960) or natural topography (Norberg-Schultz, 1979) has come under challenge, permitting a broader and more nuanced understanding of what a place is or could be.

Manuel Castells (1996) introduced the notion of places of flow, and Doreen Massey (2006) described relational spaces. Both contributed to an understanding of networks of places, and of places being part of—and influenced by—other places around the world. The development of regional cities and the landscape metropolises makes this relational understanding of places more important than ever (Velde & Tisma, 2014). Important contributions to further understanding public spaces as places of multi-layered meaning, places to which different people attach different meanings, places in which it is possible to meet the 'other', those who are unlike oneself, have been provided by Ali Madanipour (1999) and Hajer & Reindorph (2002). In this context, place refers both to a location with specific material attributes and to immaterial qualities connected to the material place. In various humanistic traditions such as sociology, psychology, philosophy, and aesthetic experience, such immaterial qualities have been studied in terms of meaning, flows, attachment, aesthetic experience, atmosphere, and—in the Taoist tradition—chi.

Based on the literature review and an initial pilot survey, we distilled five themes of material and immaterial qualities relevant for developing the concept of 'quiet places'. These themes formed the basis for the survey, which provided the empirical data for the present study and served as analytical lenses for understanding the results. The themes are Nature, Spatial Layout, Flow, Place Attachment, and Time-Space Pattern.

Nature

The first key theme we have identified is that of Nature, understood as the sense of being part of a larger unity called nature – its rhythms and cycles, atmosphere and climate. *"We need nature in our lives; it's not optional but essential,"* Timothy Beatley (2011, p. 3) states, suggesting the need for integrating 'biophilia', a term popularised by Edward O. Wilson (1984), meaning 'love of life or living systems', suggestive of the instinctive bond between human beings and other living systems with the built environment. While Beatley emphasises the material dimension of the natural world and in so doing strikes an underlying, anti-urban chord, Norberg-Schultz (1979, p. 23) suggests that *"In general any understanding of the natural environment grows out of a primeval experience of nature as a multitude of living 'forces', including genius loci, or spirit of place."* Likewise, Kongjian Yu (1994) associates the concept of genius loci with the concept of chi, i.e. the immaterial energy at the core of Feng Shui, influencing the balance and harmony in all things, including people and places.

Spatial Layout

The second theme we have extracted is Spatial Layout, which spans the encounter between others and oneself as it is enhanced by the built environment, its actual functions, scale, materials, and textures. *"Architectural space, because it can seem to mirror rhythms of human feeling, has been called 'frozen music' – specialized time,"* Tuan suggests (2010, p. 118), while Braae (2015, p. 122) states, *"The aesthetic dimension is not an optional add-on to managing the town and landscape as dynamic systems but an integral aspect. Aesthetics is not a matter of ornamentation but of creating experiences and spaces for social routines*

and spatial anchored activities." Araujo (2012, p. 44) suggests that the fluidity arising from the constant exchange of information has closed the distance between the person and city, in contrast to the Vitruvian principle of permanence, saying that *"As Einstein demonstrated, matter and energy are interchangeable, but the greatest part of architects seems to not have yet taken that into consideration. Buildings need to transform and reach a mode of dimension that performs the passage from matter to energy, from data to sensations."* Also criticising the Euclidian perspective, Gernot Böhme (2013) highlights atmosphere, while Araujo (2012, p. 52) argues that, *"topological space suspends the rigid dualistic and idealist logic of Euclidian space."*

Flow

The third theme is Flow, understood as flow of energy. The economic and geographic dynamics of the 'space of flow' have profoundly influenced our understanding of place and space over the past decades, focusing attention on flows of information, production, and knowledge (Castells, 1996). However, the dynamics of cyclical, natural flows as they apply to the natural world, whether at the level of the environment or that of the individual, have received less attention in the context of urban space. From a Western psychology perspective, Csikszentmihalyi (1992) describes the experience of flow as a state in which the individual may encounter a sensation of transcendence or oneness with the surroundings, a feeling that, according to Csikszentmihalyi, is at the root of happiness and enjoyment of life. Csikszentmihalyi does not connect flow directly to the built environment, whereas traditional Chinese philosophy regarding places and spatial layout, Feng Shui, may help us as it acknowledges the presence of chi—flows of energy. Chi is an energy that *"animates and flows in the landscapes of the world as much as it does in our own bodies and the cosmic universe,"* explains Mills (1999, pp. 71-77), while Jiang (2014) explains that *"The Chinese philosophy contains the art of managing the dynamics through a relative stillness or quietness"* suggesting that alignment with 'material-immaterial landscapes' may be key when looking for 'quiet places' beyond restorative qualities.

Place Attachment

Place Attachment is the fourth theme. Doreen Massey (1994, p. 146) asks *"How, in the face of all this movement and intermixing, can we retain any sense of a local place and its particularity?"* and argues that what we need is a global sense of place. Earlier, Yi-Fu Tuan (1977, p. 179/2011, p. 3) suggested that "If we see the world as process, constantly changing, we should not be able to develop any sense of place," building upon the underlying premise that *"Place is security and space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other."* At first glance, Tuan's notion of place attachment seems at odds with Massey's global sense of place but the suggestion from Alberto Pérez-Gómez (2016) about the importance of 'attunement' might reconcile them. Pérez-Gómez speaks of attunement as a connectedness with the atmosphere of one's surroundings, of architecture and environments that can enhance our human values and capacities by being 'attuned' to a location and its inhabitants. Here we may find new inspiration in Tuan's suggestion that space is freedom and embrace an understanding that allows 'quiet places' to also be anchored in the space of flow, gaining particularity and stimulating a sense of a local place.

Time-Space Pattern

The Time-Space pattern addresses rhythm and urban pulse. *"From the Renaissance onward, time in Europe was steadily losing its repetitious and cyclical character and becoming more and more directional,"* suggests Tuan (1977/2011, p. 136). Lefebvre (2004) also draws our attention to the cyclical nature of time, suggesting that while *"Cartesian geometry is a reductive way of understanding space, so too is the measure of time, the*

clock, a reductive comprehension, whereas cyclical time scales, on the other hand, are rooted in nature, the seasons, the cycles of birth and death, and the physiological rhythms of the body." In the context of social acceleration, Rosa (2015, 17:46-17:56) advances the cyclical perspective by arguing, that "It is not the concept of acceleration, and it's not the concept of 'slow down' that might help us get out of the acceleration cycle, it's the concept of resonance." According to Rosa, *"we need a thorough analysis of the conditions of resonance"* (ibid, 17:46-17:56), for which we may find inspiration in Norberg-Schultz (1979, p. 8), paralleling emotions with material aspects, when stating, *"the everyday life-world consists of concrete phenomena, including natural processes and more intangible phenomena such as feelings."* Thus equipped with inspiration from the literature review on material and immaterial qualities of place, we embarked on an investigation of interlinkages between these qualities and their perceived value as 'quiet'.

Comparing urban spaces

An explorative case study design

The overall approach of this research work is explorative and phenomenological, comprising a multiple-case study design with maximum variation cases (Flyvbjerg, 2011). An annual discussion in an expert planners' forum provided a transdisciplinary backdrop for defining the study's scope and investigation tools, including a 'semi-quantitative' questionnaire that served the purpose of providing a discussion space for identifying the phenomenon in question, as well as addressing users' everyday life experiences. Testing the tool, we decided to expand the method of inquiry by conducting qualitative interviews in connection with the questionnaire survey. Hence, interviews were conducted with over half (66%) of the survey respondents. Inspired by Lefebvre's (2004) invitation to the rhythmanalyst we pursued an interdisciplinary approach, and from a point of neutral, multisensory perception, we 'listened' to the case study area.

Case selection criteria's & case areas description

Amsterdam and Copenhagen were chosen as case study cities, as they share many characteristics, with both cities demonstrating a redefinition of compact city ideals in the context of the network city and the landscape metropolis. The two cities have sustainable ambitions, a strong focus on soft transportation modes, medium densities in the city centre, and a strong focus on urban redevelopment. There are also differences between them in relation to urban culture, and spatial and environmental characteristics, which on the one hand make them comparable and on the other hand offer a broader empirical basis than would a one-city case study set-up.
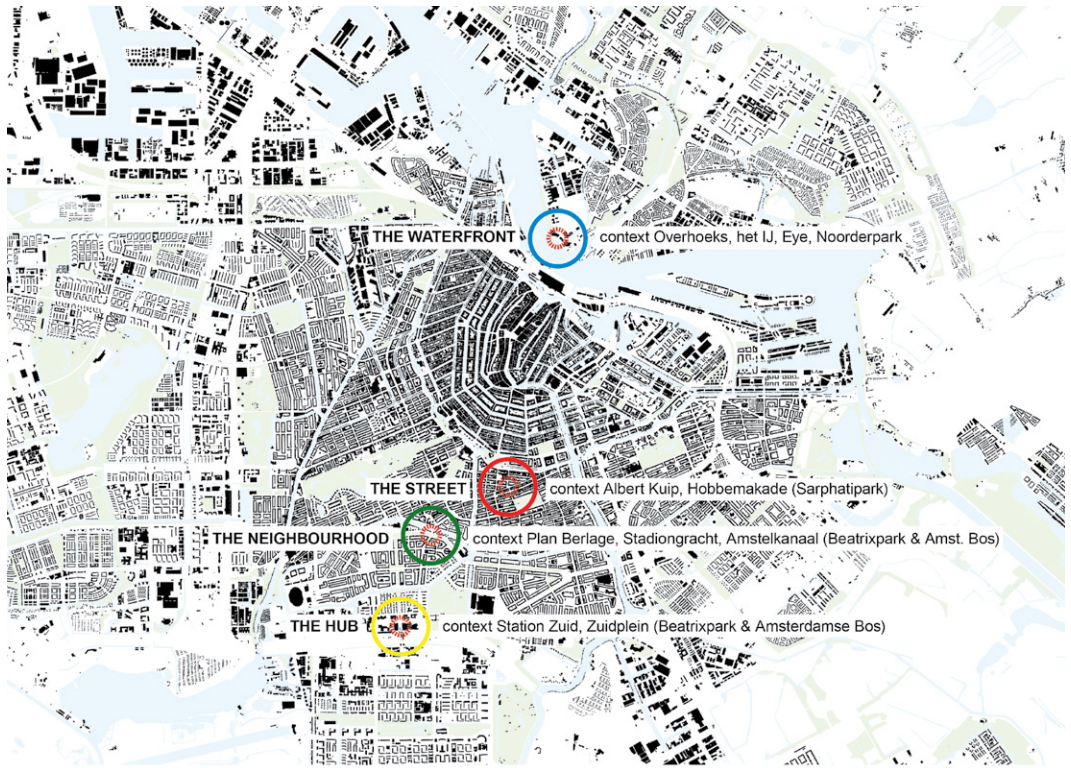
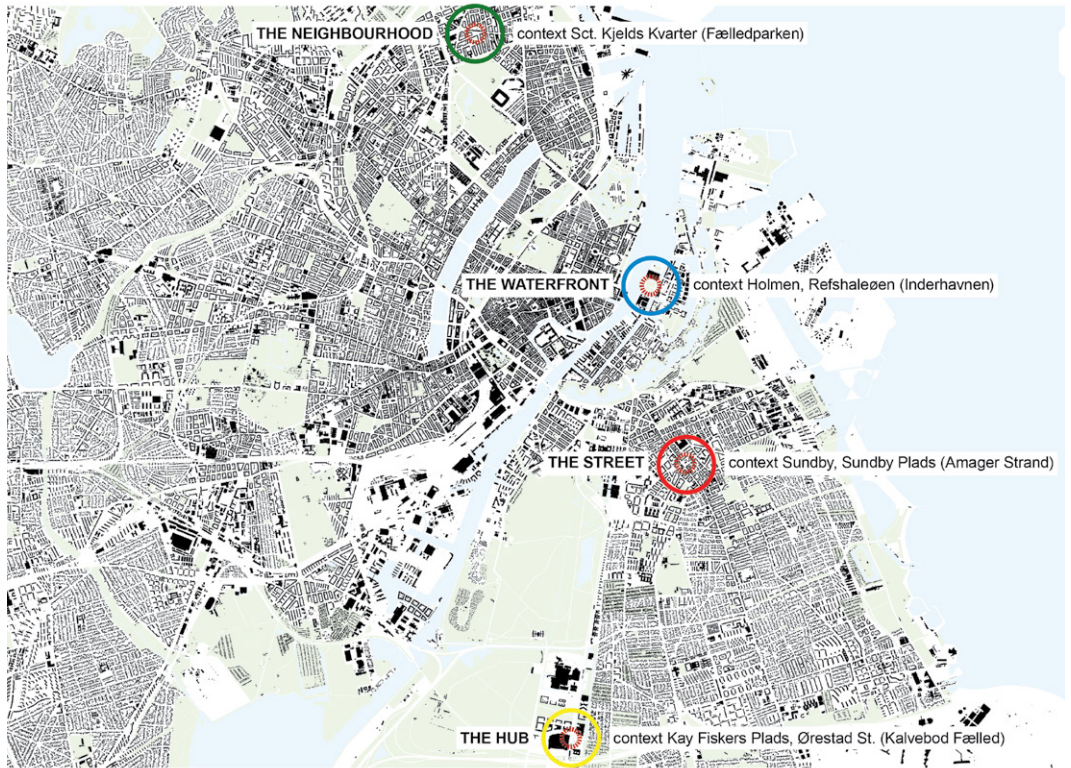FIGURE 1 Amsterdam and the four typologies. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

FIGURE 2 Copenhagen and the four typologies. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

Four typologies and four types

We focused on spatial types in the compact city, choosing four parallel urban typologies as case study areas in each of the two cities (Figs. 1-2). Focusing on relational space and places of flow, we did not delineate the sites by spatial or administrative parameters, and based the choice of case study areas on parameters such as urban context, functionality, and spatial characteristics alongside our intuitive understandings and sensory experiences of, for example, atmosphere and flow. We outlined four types, reflecting particular spatial characteristics: the Hub, the Street, the Neighbourhood, and the Waterfront.

The Hub is defined here as a place that is part of a large-scale, high density, commercial, residential, and infrastructural development, consisting of individual, large-scale volumes and 'generic iconic architecture', situated in close proximity to the airport and with easy access to the city centre. In both cases, the developments were affected by economic and political factors, opening up the area for alternative visions of its development. Therefore, in one case, underground development is yet to come, while in the other, above-ground development is still in progress (Fig. 3).

a   Amsterdam

b   Copenhagen
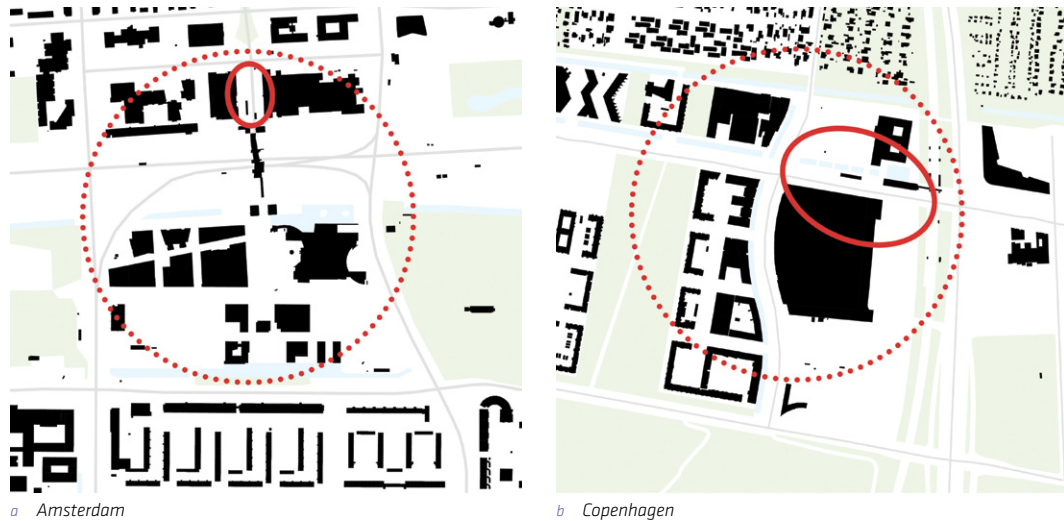
FIGURE 3   The Hub (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

The Street is characterised by late-1800s building blocks, including courtyards of varying private and semi-private status. Corresponding public space facilities reflect the characteristics of the type, as do materiality and landscaping, prioritising the 'street' and the 'square' as structural elements. In one case, public space use has already expanded beyond its original functionality; in the other, urban revitalisation including functional landscape and urban nature features are influencing public space articulations and dynamics (Fig. 4).

a   Amsterdam   *b*   Copenhagen
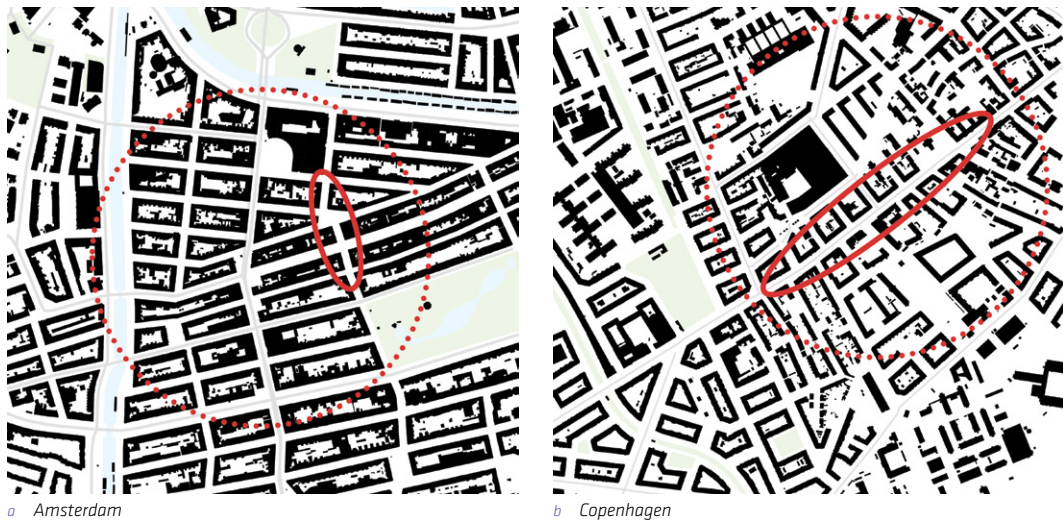
FIGURE 4   The Street (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

The Neighbourhood is characterised by formal spatial articulations across scale. The architecture and the detailing of the residential structures demonstrate an articulated sense of materiality and proportionality, reflective of an underlying 'human scale' approach. Wide tree-lined streets provide the area with a spatial generosity, along with the public space programming. In one case, the type exemplifies the inspiration of the epoch by emulating nature through its objects and features; in the other, functional landscape features exemplify another perspective by mimicking natural processes and cycles (Fig. 5).

a   Amsterdam   *b*   Copenhagen
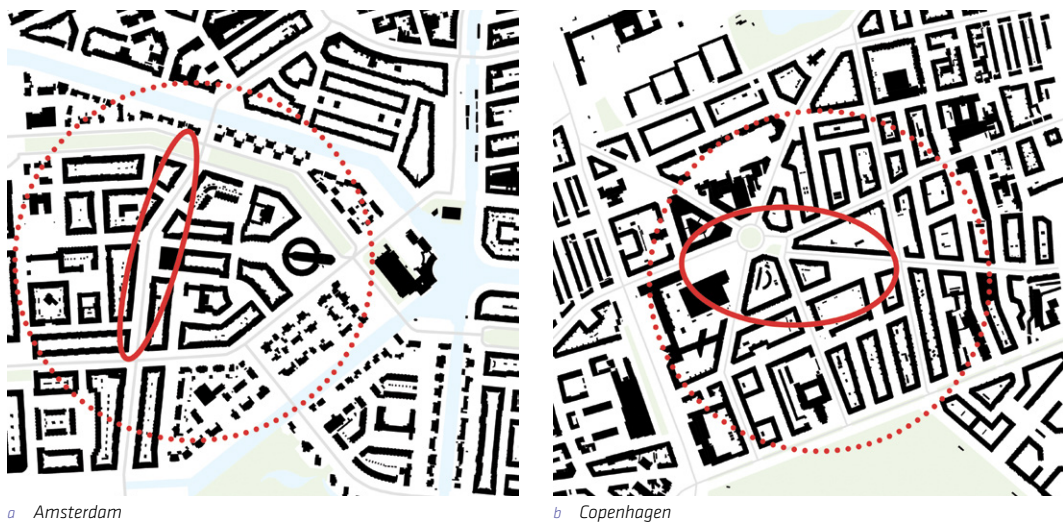
FIGURE 5   The Neighbourhood (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

The Waterfront is characterised by a number of large-scale functions such as cultural institutions and features such as monumental architecture, abundant space, unbroken horizons, and soundscapes that blend with the waterscape and the urban landscape. Situated along the water and close to the city centre, the atmosphere is characterised by cultural as well as natural features and urban dynamics, fully integrated within the urban memory and dynamics in one case, and with largely infrastructural connections in the other (Fig. 6).

a   Amsterdam

b   Copenhagen
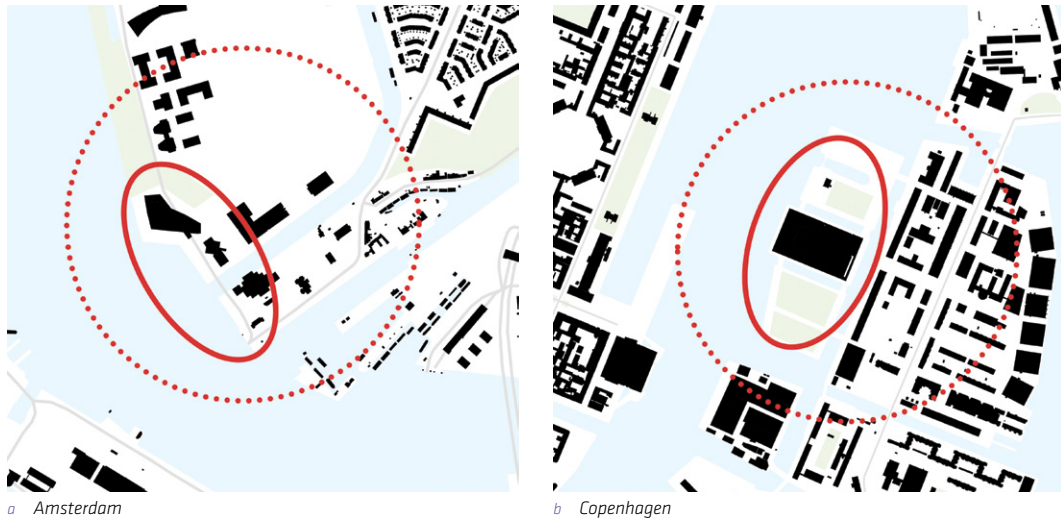
FIGURE 6 The Waterfront (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

Questionnaire

The questionnaire comprised a brief introduction, a list of associative indicators, and 12 statements reflecting the five themes: Nature, Spatial Layout, Flow, Place Attachment, and Time-Space Pattern (Fig. 7). Respondents were asked to fill out a five-point agree-disagree scale while referring to their actual geographical position within the case study area. In addition, they were asked to state other potential locations or reflections corresponding with the focus of the questionnaire. The 12 statements were divided into two categories, The General Appreciation Category and The Themes Category, of which the General Appreciation category partly covered the Place Attachment theme. This category referred to how much importance the interviewee generally attached to feeling connected with one's surroundings or with the earth, figuratively or literally, when it came to feeling aligned with one's surroundings.

a   five-point agree-disagree scale

b   map for indicating other potential locations or reflections

FIGURE 7 The map based questionnaire (Design by Wiemann Nielsen, H., 2014)

Fieldwork

Over the period from June to October 2014, fieldwork was conducted in Copenhagen and Amsterdam. In addition to the questionnaire survey, open-ended interviews were performed, of which selected quotes are integrated into the in-depth analyses, although here these refer only to the Hub. The questionnaire was presented to respondents on site, and each case study area was visited morning, afternoon, and evening, as well as at the weekend. Respondents were asked to provide factual information, revealin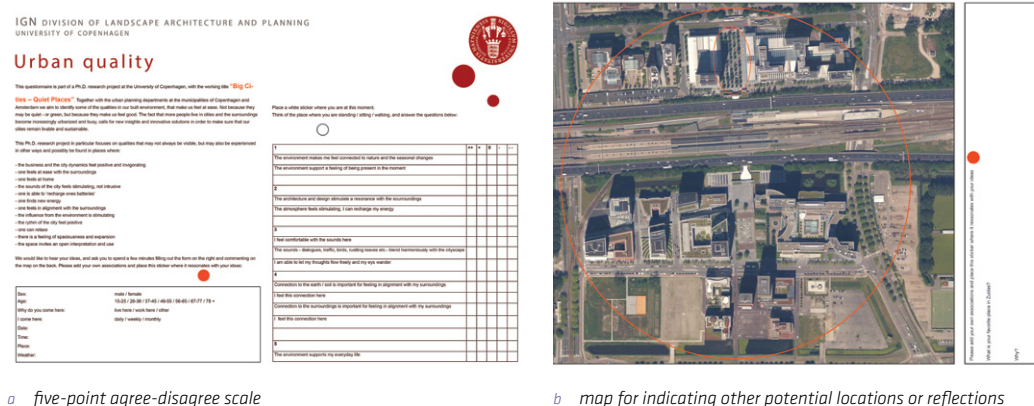g a diverse group of residents and visitors, but otherwise socio-economic factors were not part of the study focus (Fig. 8 and 9).
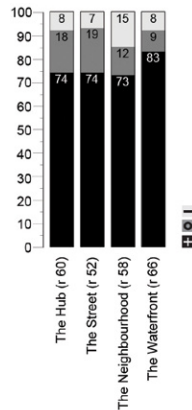
FIGURE 8 Responses (r) to the general appreciation category (%). Each session was opened by asking the respondents whether it was important for them to feel connected to the Earth and aligned with their surroundings. Over 70% of respondents found that this was important for them, with responses from the Waterfront receiving a maximum of 83%. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)
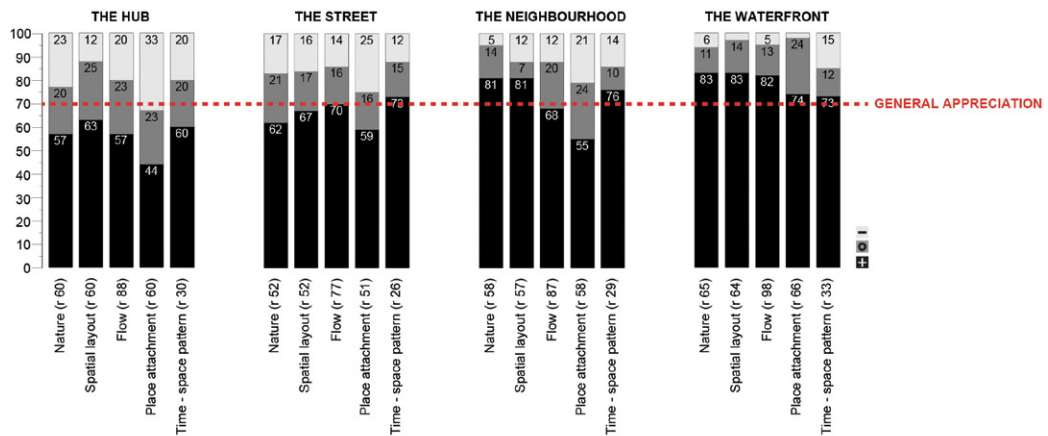
FIGURE 9 Responses (r) to the themes category (%). All four types received more than 50 % positive responses to the five themes, except for the Hub. The dispersion between the positive responses to the five themes varied among the four types, having the Waterfront receiving the most positive responses, followed by the Neighbourhood and the Street. The type receiving the fewest positive responses was the Hub. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

Serving as an 'opening and closing act' for each visit, first-person phenomenological and multisensorial observations, including notations and documentary photos directed North, East, South, and West were conducted as a structured 'listen' to the case study area (see Lefebvre, 2004).

FIGURE 10   Zuidas. Photos directed North, East, South, West on 7 July 2014. In the case of Zuidas, the station, including the planned high-speed train connection to Schiphol Airport and the wider Europe, central to the logic of the space of flows, *"is a barbaric mess. For example, this station is not a station. It's just a piece of canvas without a building. It's an illusion, a very poorly designed space,"* a respondent in Zuidas says on 7 July 2014. On 3 July 2014, another respondent says, *"Well, it's a beautiful square. And with the kids on a Saturday, they think it's fantastic, all these high buildings. You don't really have that in the Netherlands as this is all very centralised."* (Images by Wiemann Nielsen, H., 2014)
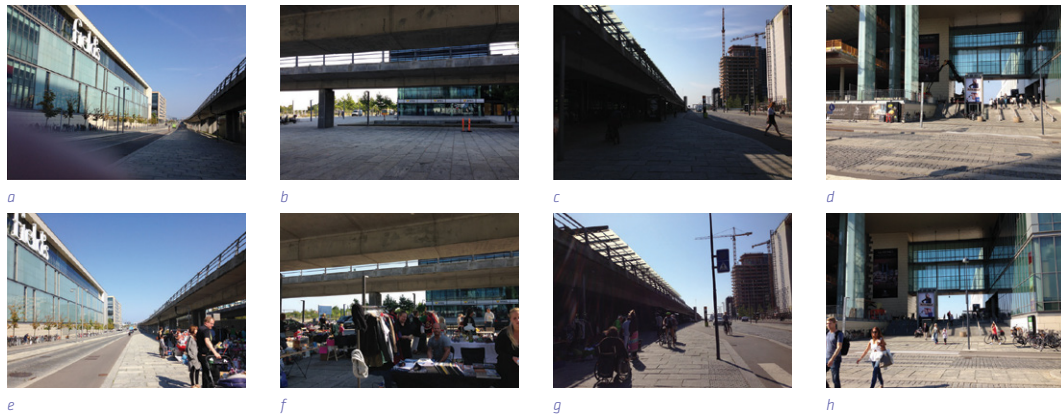
FIGURE 11   Ørestad. Photos directed North, East, South, West on 6 September 2014. *"Sometimes they make some events in the area in order to make it sort of yeah, it's a weird area. It's like they've sort of forgotten that it's meant for people to live in – it's all very decent and orderly, it's very clean and… square, but not welcoming and warm. It's as if they've forgotten about cosiness here (…) You don't get more energy as such, but it's convenient – very easy to travel to and from,"* a respondent says of Ørestad on 6 September 2014. (Images by Wiemann Nielsen, H., 2014)

The type receiving the least positive responses was the hub. Curious to understand why, we performed an in-depth analysis of the Hub, represented by the two case study areas of Zuidas, Amsterdam and Ørestad, Copenhagen (Fig. 12).
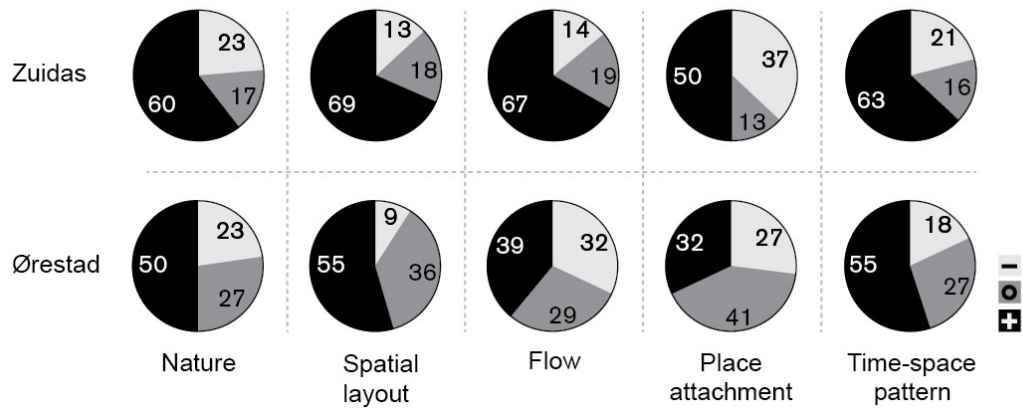
FIGURE 12 Responses (r) to the five themes (%). The most noticeable difference between Zuidas and Ørestad is evident in response to the Flow theme. While drawing upon the same inspiration, the programmatic premise varies notably in the two cases. Zuidas provides a work-related, high-density environment, while the almost local reality and spatial layout of the only partially developed Ørestad area seems to not yet realise this premise. *"It's too easy, you don't have any interaction within the area. The only thing you get is the flea market, and it just isn't nice to be placed under a damned concrete flyover. It's not nice, right? It just isn't very attractive here, and that's all right. But if you move out here and expect it to be the nicest place in the world, you would get a little shock,"* a respondent says of Ørestad on 6 September 2014. Zuidas received substantially more positive responses than did Ørestad, while Ørestad received mostly neutral and negative responses. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

Zuidas site visits were conducted at the Zuidplein, the public space to the north of the infrastructure, which works in connection with the Mahlerplein and the George Gerschwinplein to the south (Fig. 13). Ørestad visits were conducted at street level, adjacent to the shopping centre and in close proximity to Kay Fiskers Plads and the Ørestad Train and Metro Station (Fig. 14).

a

b
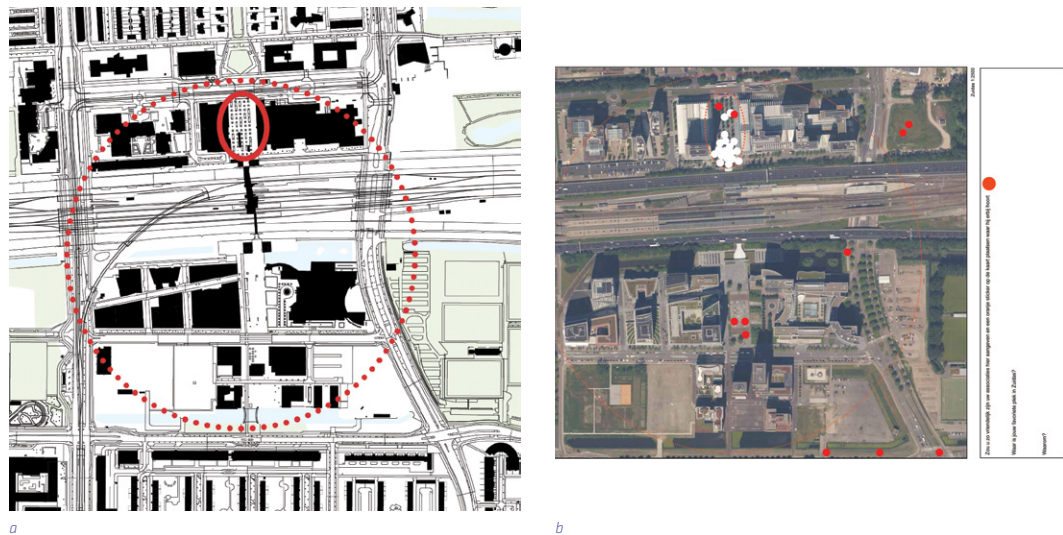
FIGURE 13 Case area Zuidas. Despite the transitional space characteristics, the layout and detailing of Zuidplein provide smaller pockets of intimacy. Planned within an intricate spatial layout of towers and infrastructure above and below ground, attention to liveability in the case of Zuidas has inspired public space design in the tradition of Jane Jacobs (1961). (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016, and map based part of the questionnaire by Wiemann Nielsen, H., 2014)

a   b
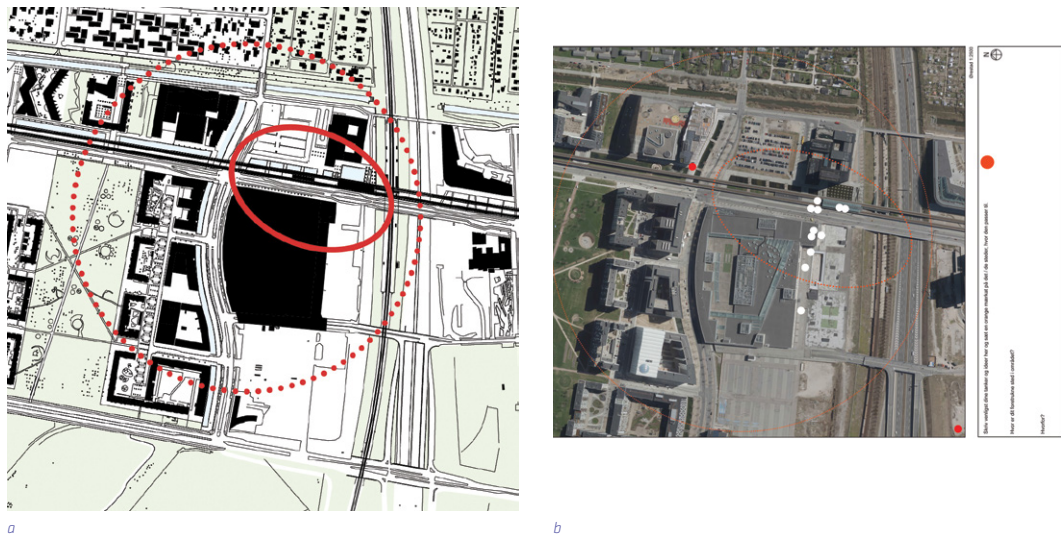
FIGURE 14   Case area Ørestad. Such elements are missing in Ørestad. Instead, small scale interventions aim to introduce 'human scale' elements, primarily of recreational character. Large scale business and institutional structures as well as a shopping centre have generated more localised, introverted public spaces, somehow matched by the train station, which provides connections to nearby Copenhagen Airport and further on to Sweden. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016, and map based part of the questionnaire by Wiemann Nielsen, H., 2014).

Based in the five themes, Nature, Spatial Layout, Flow, Place Attachment, and Time-Space Pattern, the descriptive statistics worked well to inform the selection of the Hub, while respondent's reactions further informed the themes, supporting the explorative approach.

Discussion

This study sought to investigate the theme of particular places from the perspective of 'quiet places', by examining potential links between material and immaterial qualities, and subsequently to test a means of tracing them. We hypothesised that there would be a difference in the findings between the types as well as between the two cities. Were we able to test our hypotheses?

There were clear differences between the four types, as well as internal differences between the types, as is evident in the in-depth analyses of the Hub. Precisely because of the differences in the types, this material provides a good basis for discussing the five themes from a cross-case perspective.

In the Nature theme, while the Hub and the Street appear less 'green' than the Neighbourhood or the Waterfront, they still receive well above 50% positive responses, for which we may find inspiration in a broader perspective on Nature as a multitude of 'living forces', including 'genius loci or 'spirit of place' (Norberg-Schultz, 1979). This may also explain the stimulating feeling of everything becoming one, as perceived by a respondent, speaking of *"city, trees, people, animals flow together – in short 'Nature'."* In the case of the Waterfront, the findings are consistent with those of White, Smith, Humphryes, Pahl, Snelling & Depledge (2010) , where the restorative effect of water in both natural and urban settings was found to enhance positive reactions, while in the case of the Neighbourhood, the architectonic detailing and balanced blend between cityscape and landscape seems consistent with the thinking on 'biophilia', meaning 'love of life or living systems' (Beatley, 2011).

In all four types, the built environment differs in terms of scale, density, function, and articulation. The structures in the Hub and the Waterfront form individual volumes whereas in the case of the Neighbourhood and the Street, they form an ensemble. In the case of the Hub, the low ranking in the Spatial Layout theme is consistent with the findings of Hajer and Reijndorp (2002), who argue for places with multi-layered meanings, places in which it is possible to meet the 'other', those who are unlike oneself. This characteristic applies less to the Hub than to the Street. In the cases of the Neighbourhood and the Waterfront, the well-articulated, spatial generosity and detailing stimulate a sense of place, a sense of harmony provided by the spatial properties, which for the Waterfront involves unhindered views, allowing for undirected attention. These findings are consistent with those of Ulrich et al. (1991).

In the Flow theme, the findings in the case of the Hub are consistent with Castells' (2009) description of smooth, frictionless environments. The soundscape and flowscape in the Hub and the Street is loud and dense, which may account for the fewer positive responses. There is a notable difference between the two, however, in that the Hub receives 57% positive responses while the Street receives 70%. Why is this the case? The answer may be found in the more mono-functional character of the Hub, also in terms of its soundscape and flow. In the case of the Neighbourhood and in particular the Waterfront, rhythms are softer, smoother, and more free flowing, with abundant space to merge and mingle, highlighting the importance of qualities such as genius loci and chi, as suggested by the findings of Mills (1999) and Csikszentmihalyi (1992).

In the case of the Place-Attachment theme, the feeling of alignment provided by connection with one's surroundings or with the earth, figuratively or literally, may not be reflected in the generic architectural and spatial qualities of the predominantly work-related environment of the Hub. It ranks lowest among the four types individually, while positive responses in the General Appreciation Category exceed 70%. We suggest that the findings are consistent with those of Massey (1994), who questions the potential for retaining a sense of local place and its particularity, arguing instead for a global sense of place. They are also consistent with those of Araujo (2013), who argues that 'the city' no longer exists.

With linear time-cycles dominating the Hub, responses to the Time-Space Pattern are consistent with the findings of Lefebvre (1992, 2013), paralleling such time-cycles with Cartesian geometry and a reductive understanding of space. Cyclical time scales are just as present in the Hub as in the other four types but may be easier to identify in the other types due to functional differences. We speculate that the Hub's structure and functionality by themselves stimulate a linear mental environment whereas the Street, the Neighbourhood, and the Waterfront stimulate a different environment, allowing for a higher degree of resonance, of connecting with cyclical time scales, emotions, and feelings. These findings are consistent with those of Rosa (2015), who suggests that the concept of resonance might help us escape the acceleration cycle.

The implications of this study apply to theory as well as practice. They add a new perspective to the long acknowledged relationship between green spaces and restorative qualities for humans, by bringing forth new insights on interlinkages between material and immaterial aspects of the environment in a relational spatial context. It proposes a 'quiet place' perspective, instead of a 'quiet area' perspective and suggests that particular places in urban settings can be characterised by 'material-immaterial landscapes' properties. By looking into other disciplines and formulating five thematic lenses, it offers a new vocabulary to inspire understandings of place for the landscape metropolis.

The limitations should also be addressed. Conducting the study in a transdisciplinary setting, including users' perceptions and opinions, meant that the investigation tools and empirical material were perhaps too complex. That said, the iterative approach and explorative method allowed us the necessary flexibility to add qualitative interviews, when the questionnaire survey failed to capture subtleties and nuances in the respondents' reactions.

Research on the concept of 'quiet places' could continue in many directions. Here, we have made an initial identification of the phenomenon and have come up with a suggestion about interlinkages between place characteristics and material and immaterial qualities. We have focused on stimulating and uplifting perspectives and have briefly touched on the relationship between inner climate and outer climate. This remains to be studied. Further investigations of the Eastern concept of managing dynamics through a 'relative stillness or quietness' has the potential for inspiring the Western concept of managing resources through quantitative measures, and opening new avenues towards a broader definition of sustainability. Spatial characteristics and sound properties also require further parallel investigation, with reference to their dimensional properties and perceived impacts.

Conclusion

In order to study interlinkages between material and immaterial qualities of particular places and their perceived value as 'quiet', we applied a combined perspective on flow, rhythm, aesthetic experience, and resonance, and physical and functional parameters. By looking into other disciplines, we developed five thematic lenses that turned out to be useful for an understanding of a set of particular places in the compact city and the landscape metropolis. We examined spatial configurations of four spatial types for which the themes worked as frames of understanding, guiding our investigation and design of investigation tools. We adopted an explorative method's approach and conducted a 'semi-quantitative' survey, by which we introduced a field of tension between the ephemeral quality of the phenomenon in question and the nitty gritty magic of everyday life.

We investigated the theme of particular places from the perspective of 'quiet places', and learned that linkages may be produced by properties such as open horizons, spatial layout and articulation, architectural properties, textures, and materials – not just by 'green' parameters or dB ratio levels. That spatial generosity and unhindered views may allow us to expand to the fullness of our being, and that urban soundscapes also hold the potential for enhancing 'quiet place' characteristics through their 'flow' properties.

Adding characteristics of particular places together does not equal 'material-immaterial landscapes'. However, based on the linkages and relational characters of place, we see the potential for developing a new vocabulary for the balancing and uplifting qualities in dense urban environments, advancing our understanding of particular places in the relational city and landscape metropolis from the perspective of 'quiet places'.

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Frame and framing

a theory-based investigation into the frame as an instrument for landscape architecture

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Abstract

In this paper, I introduce the concept of the frame. The mechanisms of framing are a strategic and conceptual tool for dealing with the complexities of place in terms of site specificity. Starting from both a theoretical understanding of the frame in terms of what it does rather than what it is, and from a specific site – the territory surrounding the Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest, Romania – I investigate ways of working with a contested territory in a site specific, open-ended way. As the locus of a large-scale urban project for a new civic centre initiated in 1984 by Ceausescu and interrupted by the revolution of 1989, this territory is fixed in both scale and determination. The mechanisms of framing provide the starting point for rethinking the site through framing, in order to uncover, draw out, and reconfigure its specificities, providing a structure for a wide range of place-making practices to unfold.

Keywords

frame; framing; territory; site; place; landscape architecture

Introduction

The territory of the current Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest, Romania is difficult to grasp as a landscape. Lacking any clear, overarching coherence, it manifests as the overlapping traces of a number of incomplete large-scale operations. The most drastic transformation of the site—the destruction of the old city fabric and the construction of the Palace of the Parliament—is also the most evident, but as the transformation was incomplete, and several other smaller scale transformations took place, the site lacks any cohesion with the landscape, and presents itself as a mix of overly determined objects in an underdetermined landscape. The territory's problematique can be understood as part of the fixity of the site's delimitation or framing: the project of the civic centre ruptured existing frames, or patterns of structuring the city's urban units and patterns, and introduced a fixed, larger frame that predetermines the scale of the site. In other words, this site is not only given a priori, but is also fixed in its scale and extents through both the material and immaterial delimitation of boundaries, which further reinforce space occupations, and limit how it is understood as a place. How, then, to intervene in such a landscape, allowing its becomings to continue and the site to transform, while preserving the specificities of the site without reproducing the violent transformations that led to the landscape's creation or reinforcing its fixed status? In this paper, I introduce the concept of the frame and the mechanisms of framing as a strategic and conceptual tool for dealing with the complexities of situating a project in a landscape, enabling a number of place making, site-specific and, at the same time, open-ended practices.

In his chapter From Place to Site: Negotiating Narrative Complexity, Beauregard distinguishes between site, "a social construct […] a place that has been denatured, formalized, and colonized, its meaning made compatible with relations of production, state imperatives, and the order that they both imply", and place, which is "grounded in lived experience", and therefore constantly contingent (Beauregard, 2005, p. 40) on place-making practices that actively encounter the site. This understanding of site and place is useful as it distinguishes between two ways of transforming a landscape. The first is site, which is formalized, ordered, cumulative, impersonal, and multiple. A site emerges from the formalization of a number of geological, vegetal, economic, social, and cultural processes and practices through their framing, an act that includes some of these aspects at the exclusion of others. The second, place, is contingent and variable, and requires an encounter with the site. A place is made through repeated encounters with the site and, in turn, contributes to the processes from which a site emerges and continues to transform. In its becoming, a site is framed, and therefore limited through inclusions and exclusions of what is formalized, while a place emerges from the encounters framed by a site as a construct, but also with that which is peripheral, escapes or is excluded by the frame. Site without place is fixed in meaning, while place without site risks becoming unspecific, diffuse, and lost. These two notions are not intrinsically clear-cut or final: the landscape-forming processes from which a site is framed continue to unfold, and have the potential to transform the site beyond even its initial framings, while the practices from which place results can be formalized and fixed. Site and place are not definite aspects of a landscape, but methods of distinguishing how parts of landscaped are grasped and understood, and how they can hold meaning and resonate with further articulations and elaborations.

In order to intervene in a landscape as a landscape architect, a site must first be apprehended. What are the extents of this site? How can the boundaries of the site, and the components and attributes that form it be determined? As Beauregard points out, a design intervention has "[as] most common scenario […] the turning of place into site in order to turn site into place" (Beauregard, 2005, p.55). This is a complex process of negotiation, which signifies a moment of erasure of past place making practices, and the narratives they imply, in order to generate new ones: "The scenario moves forward by the deployment of pre-existing and shared understandings as well as novel interpretations. Because there is no essence to any site, no single

truth waiting to be discovered, different site knowledges–of the architect, the investor, the bureaucrat, and others– need to be negotiated. Narratives are constructed and deconstructed prior to but in harmony with the physical transformation eventually to be realized." (Beauregard, 2005, p.55). This negotiation becomes more difficult, and more necessary, when dealing with a contested site. The territory surrounding the House of the People, now Palace of the Parliament, in Bucharest, Romania is such a site, whose recent history was imposed in a top down, violent manner and as an explicitly political act of power over territory. This contested landscape was the result of a large-scale project for a civic centre, the construction of which began in 1986 having been initiated by Ceausescu in 1977 after the earthquake of that year.
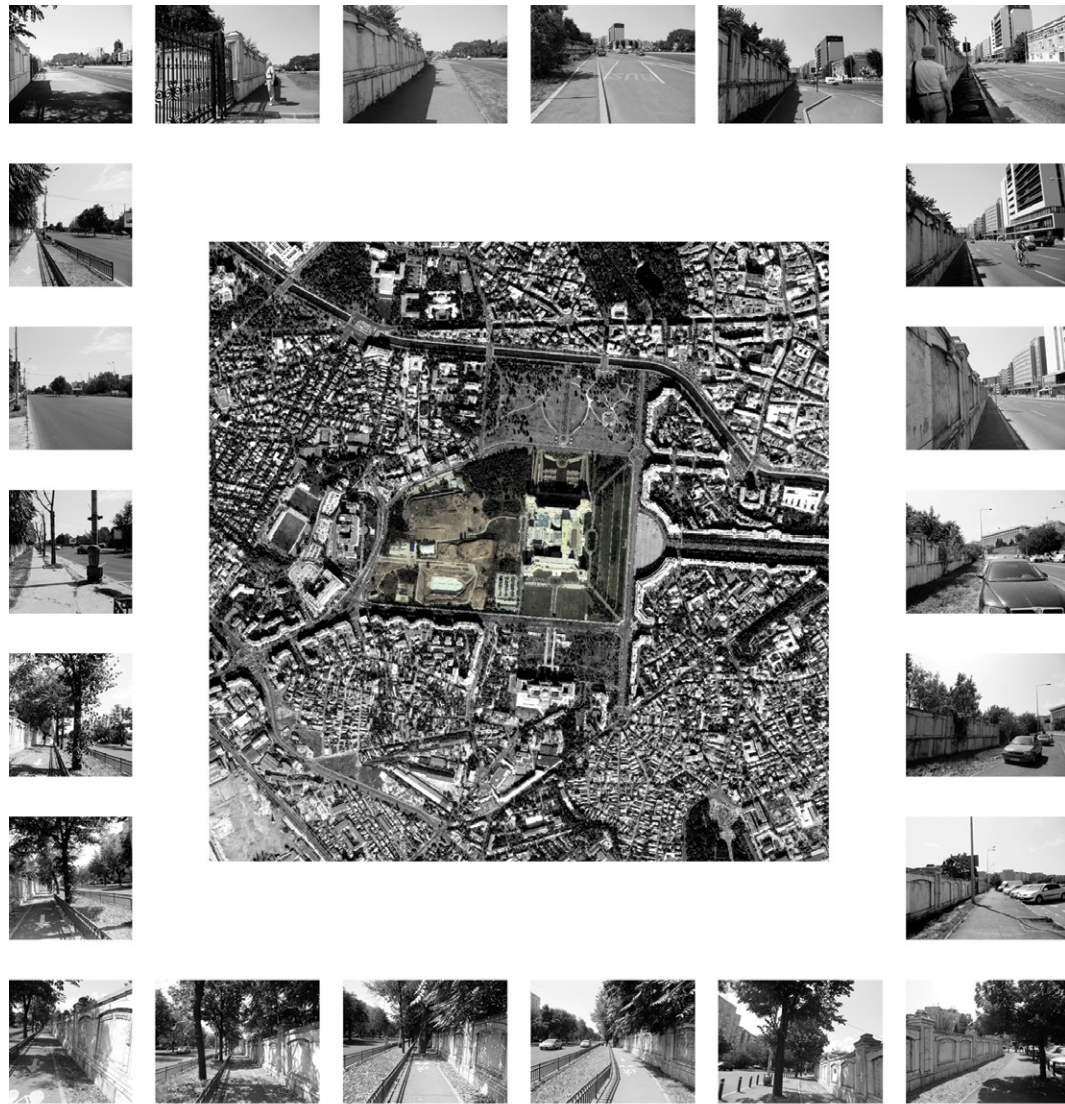
FIGURE 1 Territory of the Palace of the Parliament and wall. The Palace of the Parliament and its surrounding territory, located in centre of Bucharest, is disconnected from both the urban fabric and city life by a wall, wide avenues, and large buildings lining the site, but also through lack of programme and variety of uses. This is a framing that not only organizes the understanding of space through its material manifestations, predetermining a larger-than-life scale, but also is actively enforced through the practices it overdetermines: through the limitation of access enforced by the wall surrounding the Palace, and those it underdetermines, such as the spontaneous vegetation growing in isolated corners beyond the wall. This is experienced directly when walking along the wall - a very long walk with little variation in scale or experience. The continuous presence of the wall is coupled with a view that is fragmented and difficult to read. This experience makes clear the difficulty of reading the site beyond the presence of this wall, and furthermore, highlights its peripheral status in the centre of the city. (Photograph by Alexandrescu, 2015, p. 17). doi:10.7480/spool.2016.1.1135.g1497

Theoretical framework

Although, as a site, the territory has undergone both clear, formalized operations, the current lived experience of the site is largely segregated from the larger lived experience of the city, while the past lived experience was literally bulldozed away. The scale of the site alienates the human observer and makes it incomprehensible as a scene, while the limits, boundaries and related practices limit and predetermine the possible encounters and engagements with the site.

Deleuze and Guattari's geophilosophy (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; 1994) provides a way of understanding the landscape that displaces the human lens in order to try to elaborate on an idea of landscape that does not require an external, transcendental set of values or ideology, nor an individual human observer. The dichotomy of the observing the landscape either from the inside or outside can be displaced by uncentering the landscape from the eye of a single observer and observing it in terms of its intrinsic specificities. Rather than resulting in a more 'objective' view of the landscape, the aim of this approach is to avoid dichotomy of subject and object, and rethink the frame as a mechanism approaching a landscape, one that is deliberate in its exclusions and inclusions, and always contingent to a territory's specificities. This could enable a site-specific approach to landscape that nonetheless leaves the making of place open and contingent to the encounters it supports.

Site problematique

The problematique of grasping the territory of the Palace of the Parliament as a site can be understood in part by the fixity of its delimitation, or framing: the project of the civic centre ruptured existing frames, or patterns of structuring the city's urban units and configurations, and introduced a fixed, larger frame that predetermines the scale of the site. The result is a site whose identity is imposed and fixed by spatial means beyond and before any other determinants or factors such as those economic (ownership, investment), legislative (property lines, zoning), social (use, programming, practices) or cultural (meanings, resonances). This in turn limits and predetermines not only the meaning of the site as a place, but also the transformation of the site.

Given the site's difficult history, the necessity of questioning how the site is presented becomes even more apparent in order to begin to negotiate the transformation of the site beyond this fixed frame. In the particular case of the Palace of the Parliament, the question revolves around how to read the site from within its own parameters, neither reproducing Ceausescu's violent actions on the site through a transcendental, totalizing vision of the site, nor returning to an idealized state of the site before its partial destruction. By examining how the site is framed through an investigation into the mechanisms of framing, the site's specificities can be uncovered in terms of both past and current processes and practices, and reframed to allow an open–ended future.

In order to develop an open-ended understanding of the mechanisms of the frame, it is first conceptualized not through what it is (material, form), but rather through what it does (inclusion/exclusion, separation), to allow for an expanded view of specific site making that is contingen on an expanded understanding of its context. The frame provides a mechanism for grasping the site immanently: from within, and on its own criteria. As developed by the geophilosophy of Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; 1994) and

elaborated upon by Cache (Earth Moves, 1995) and Grosz (2012), the concept of the frame as described here is a way of making specific, through processes of inclusion and exclusion and the enacting of a separation. This specific rethinking of the frame allows for a way of ordering the forces of the earth into territory, and subsequently into what we understand as landscape that is further framed into a specific site. The frame allows for an understanding of place as linked to a site's particularities but is also open to transformation, and in this way it can be used as both an analytical tool that uncovers these particularities to form a site, and a design tool that recombines, draws out, and reframes these site-specific elements along with new elaborations and articulations.

By exploring and revealing of the mechanisms of the frame and the framing of landscape, a series of site components are revealed that can be re-used precisely and strategically within a series of frames. These interventions are site-specific, and respond to the site both directly and in terms of re-imagining its possibilities and potentials in order to set up conditions for encounters with the site - to become a meaningful place.   The key components of the concept of the frame and the mechanisms of framing are as follows:

A   the frame in itself - once no longer bound by any kind of preconfigured form (walls, etc.) or type of quality (visual, etc.), the frame becomes an ordering device that exists across different scales, and that always creates a condition of inclusion and exclusion. This further has a temporal aspect - the introduction of an interval of temporary stability.

Once the frame is understood not as the limit but as the materialization trace of boundary or cohesion, the frame can be understood as a materialized aspect of that cohesion to become expressive rather than limiting, and allowing for the sense of place to co-exist with the continual growth and transformation of a specific place. As an expressive force, the frame can select and enhance particular qualities of a site, facilitating possible encounters with a site's specificities. The frame uncovers these qualities through:

B   the mechanisms of framing, which provide an understanding of the kinds of interventions on the site in relation to both how they articulate the landscape and how they allow the continuous differentiation of the landscape to continue in new ways. Framing orders by selecting an inflection, or a quality of the territory, choosing a vector or a tendency, and introducing an interval - a relative, temporary stability - a frame (Cache, 1995);

Key to this mechanism of framing is the possibility of a quasi-frame (Cache, 1995) - a frame that provides an interval not through the imposition of a boundary, but through the tension of its constituents, as well as practices and their materializations. The quasi-frame, intrinsically not-quite-yet-fixed, has a transient stability to its cohesion that is threatened by excluded elements, resulting in a process of continual framing and reframing, with each (quasi-) frame threatening larger and smaller frames in terms of potential inclusions and exclusions. This implies:

C   a series of frames of frames, wherein the frame operates on multiple scales and every frame involves an out-of-field (Deleuze, 1986), or the possibility of another frame. The landscape can be considered as a series of nested and overlapping frames. In terms of site, this means that in any given project, there is not one singular site but a series of coexisting, overlapping, and nested sites that are framed out of the landscape;

Following the mechanisms of framing, the frame can operate in two main ways: either through assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), the intensive, heterogeneous coming together of the components that creates a condition of inclusion or exclusion through the encounter of components, or through the imposition of limit or borders, the delimitation of a boundary, the separation through an external means. These two ways of framing can be used operatively - and provide the last component:
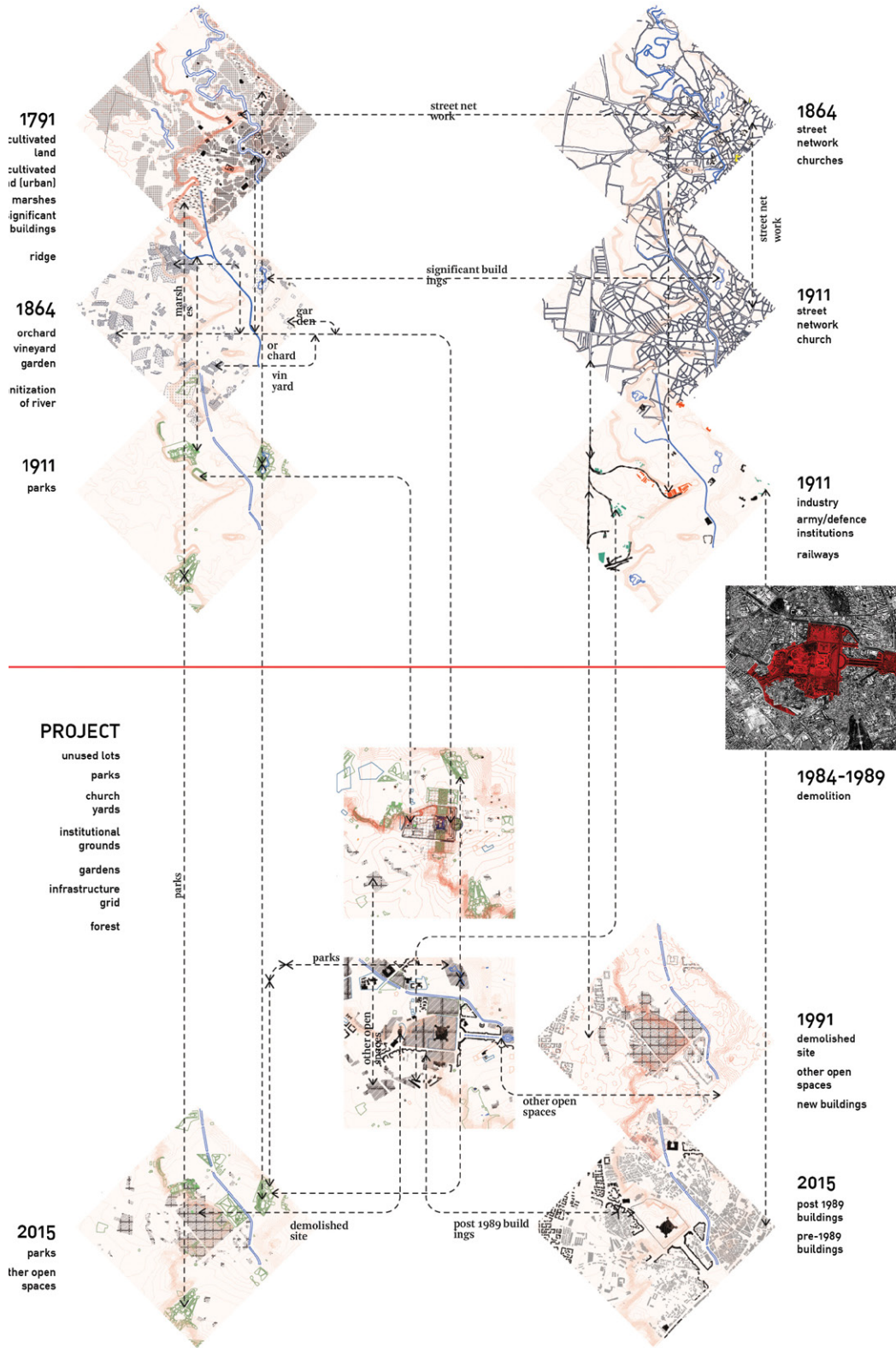
d) the frame as operative - within the context of landscape architecture interventions, framing-through-assemblage can be thought of as a 'germ', with the potential to grow and transform, while framing-through-delimitation can be thought of as 'gesture', with the ability to guarantee an interval (Alexandrescu, 2015). These two operators both involve inflection, vectors, and frames, and often are present simultaneously in a landscape intervention.

While a germ is folded-up framing, an assemblage with catalytic potential to make new frames, the gesture is a frame that allows the germ to germinate. Germ and gesture work together as double articulation in order to give form to site interventions. The role of the designer then becomes the choosing of which frames to operate in, as much as the choosing of articulations and elaborations within a frame, and the act of design becomes the implementation of germs and gesture.

Framing as a tool for analysis

Both processes and practices shape the site and give a site its specificity, which can be read in terms of frames and framings. These site-specific particularities can be understood as inflections, vectors, and frames, and can be traced back in time to specific practices. There are two kinds of specificities at play: the ones concerning those that are included or excluded, and the (topological) relations between the frames themselves. Following the speculative design project Frame-of-frames (Alexandrescu, 2015), this would first involve a set of analyses—uncovering the existing frames of the site and their potentials, as well as the practices of the site—a reading of the site in terms of its germs and gestures. At any given point, different elements play a different role in structuring the city and its transformation.

FIGURE 2 Bucharest frames in time. This mapping follows the transformation of frames in Bucharest in order to understand the territory as a continual process of framing and unframing. Rather than valuing the identity of this area as a fixed set of traces through singular objects (buildings etc.) or patterns of objects (building ensembles, gardens or parks, etc.), these mappings seek to value its specificity, while at the same time allowing processes (natural and unnatural) to continue unfolding on the site, creating more difference, and resulting in a continually heterogeneous and varied landscape. This approach allows the valuing and preservation of the specificity of a given landscape, without monumentalizing it, while also allowing it to change and grow, without erasing its past. Since 1791, the date of one of the earliest detailed maps, Bucharest has been structured by a number of different components, which have framed both the natural landscape, as well as the way the building of the city occurred. Initially, natural, geological features such as topography or geomorphology had most sway in determining which areas were settled and what land uses could be accommodated. In the 20th century, Bucharest, as many other European cities, underwent a number of transformations that coincided with the spread of industrialization and the new infrastructural needs it required, shifting the structures of the city away from natural, geological ones to infrastructural ones. These spatially and diagrammatically determining structures frame the city-making processes, natural and infrastructural, but also cultural, economical, legislative, etc. In this mapping, the division between natural and artificial is less important than the relationship between new frames and the existing: the left set of maps follows the components which draw on qualities of the geomorphology and natural processes in their framing, while the one on the right follows the imposed structures and networks of the territory. At the centre of the map is the demolition which occurred from 1984-1989, marking an interruption in the site's frames, but also enacting a new set of frames and frame-making practices. The reframing of the site positions it between the two manifestations of framings - those drawn out of a landscape and those imposed, as well as between two sets of processes: those before and after the demolition. Neither formulating an overarching historical continuity nor favouring a particular configuration, through this frame-based analysis the site is understood as a process of framing, and reveals a set of site-specific hints (both components and strategies) that can then be reconfigured, reused, and re-inserted to further transform the site. (Photograph by Alexandrescu, 2015, p. 53).
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1791
cultivated
land
cultivated
land (urban)
marshes
significant
buildings

ridge

1864
orchard
vineyard
garden

canalization
of river

1911
parks

street net
work

1864
street
network

churches

street net
work

significant build
ings

garden

orchard

vineyard

marshes

1911
street
network

church

1911
industry
army/defence
institutions

railways

1984-1989
demolition

PROJECT
unused lots
parks
church
yards
institutional
grounds
gardens
infrastructure
grid
forest

parks

parks

other open
spaces

1991
demolished
site

other open
spaces

new buildings

other open
spaces

2015
parks
other open
spaces

demolished
site

post 1989 build
ings

2015
post 1989
buildings

pre-1989
buildings

The concept of the frame can provide a flexible ordering tool for tracing the evolution and the becoming of the site. By tracing the frames that structure the place-making practices occurring on the site - the germs and gestures - through time, a frame-based analysis (Fig. 2) reveals a set of site-specific hints (both components and strategies) that can then be reconfigured, reused, and re-inserted to further transform the site. In this way, the frame becomes a tool-generating mechanism unveiling the site-specific tools, and ensures the continuity of place-making practices while allowing new ones to emerge and take place. These components are revealed without hierarchy, and without necessary causality, leaving them open to a multitude of encounters.

Bucharest, like many European cities, underwent a number of transformations that coincided with the spread of industrialization at the start of the 20th century and the new infrastructural needs it required, starting with the first urban plan in 1919 (which also coincides with the first plan in which the topography of the city is absent). As elaborated by Tudora in her book La curte. Gradina, cartier si peisaj urban in Bucuresti, which explores the role of Bucharest's gardens in the urban landscape (Tudora, 2009) these transformations resulted in a city shaped on one hand by the political - large-scale acts setup to organize and structure the growing city and, on the other hand, the vernacular - the city as built through decentralized, collective everyday actions and practices. These two kinds of growth often intersect, interrupt and affect one another; large scale projects remain unfinished, are modified by small scale actions or even by powerful individuals or groups, and vernacular collectives that have grown big (such as corporations or wealthy landowners) become capable of affecting the city at a larger scale.

These two kinds of framing practices are constantly materializing and dematerializing the city, setting up new spatial intervals and changing and modifying old ones, the traces of which accumulate and result in the city's fabric. What this frame-based analysis permits is less a tracing of causes and effects in the development of the city and more an identification of what are the key inflections, vectors, and frames of the site, that can be reconfigured on the site and which give it its specificity. Along with this, a set of milieu-making practices emerged from the inhabitant's everyday lives, lives lived in and out of private and public gardens, households and neighbourhoods (see Tudora, 2009).

Pieter Versteegh, in his introduction to the book Méandres, penser le paysage urbain (Versteegh, 2008), puts into question the primacy of built tissue as the first intervention in landscape, and the perception of urbanization being a linear process, from less urban to more urban . A frame based-approach to landscape builds on the critique and reverses the primacy of (human) built structures over territory articulation, and simultaneously reverses the relationship between landscape and city. Cities are not to be understood as urban agglomerations but rather as landscape fragmentations. What first frames territory into landscape is topography (Cache, 1995). While initially the geomorphology of Bucharest, particularly that sculpted by the river Dambovita, affected the settlement pattern of the city, which developed as neighbourhoods clustered around churches (Harhoiu, 1997). These in turn were often on topographical inflections while, in time, infrastructure and industry played a bigger role in structuring the landscape of encounters of the city. Though the topography remains an important reference point in the framing of the current city's landscape - nearly all of the city's large parks and institutions follow the ridge of the Dambovita - its role in framing these large spaces limits encounters to these designated areas. Parks and institutions are part of the everyday practices of a city, but often not part of most inhabitants' daily lives. The varying role of the topographical ridge in structuring the city and its patterns and practices of inhabitation illustrate its role as both frame and framing, and as a site determining and place-encountering element.

Between these constantly interchanging frame and framing practices that occur across multiple scales, a sense of place emerges from the daily encounters of the practices that make up the milieus of its inhabitants, and the frames themselves materialize into temporal units of cohesion or boundary: the built fabric of the city. These two aspects combine to give a specific sense of place, and are coupled in a double

articulation: the frames organize the practices into a site, structuring the milieus by setting out certain elements and drawing out specificities, while the milieus enacted through everyday practices become ordered and formalized, and generate new cohesions that, at times, materialize both informally (benches, fences, temporary structures), and formally (buildings, walls, roads). These two ways of framing create inclusions and exclusions that stifle or encourage further transformations and further framings. As a landscape making process, this mechanism is put in danger when the frame is fixed, and one singular way of framing is enforced, at the exclusion of others.

Ceausescu's project for a new civic centre violently interrupted the existing landscape-making processes with one grand, unified vision. By destroying a third of the old city's urban fabric, apart from the mass displacement, depopulation, death toll and destruction, the process of generating possibilities was annihilated. Along with all the houses destroyed, a large number of places of work, places of play, and places of commerce - the very practices that gave this landscape a sense of place - were interrupted. This was manifested not only as physical barriers such as the wall surrounding what was then known as the House of the People (today Palace of the Parliament), the avenues for vehicular traffic or the large apartment buildings lining them, but also exclusionary practices such as policing access to the area and the restrictions in place to permit only a specific population (party members) to inhabit the new neighbourhood.

The fall of the regime in 1989 left many of these works incomplete, allowing for a new set of hybrid practices to recombine them into various new milieus. The Palace of the Parliament remained unfinished and tracts of land slated for new buildings remained empty, without any new constructions taking their place. In time, these lots became overgrown. The land was further contested as ownership disputes, property speculation, and other social and economic processes were set in motion, but the fixity of the site's parameters—of the site's limit—remained unchanged.

The boundaries of the territory surrounding the Palace of the Parliament are strongly reinforced through physical barriers such as the apartment buildings lining the avenues circumscribing the site and legislative boundaries and limitations; the Palace of the Parliament is surrounded by a wall and has restricted access. These boundaries support a specific set of programmes that can occur within the site: the territory hosts monumental programmes such as the Seat of the Parliament, the National Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Cathedral of the Nation, which is currently under construction. Otherwise, the area is overgrown, underused, and utilized for occasional parking, storage or illegal garbage dumping. These activities are defined by being either institutional or peripheral, with few intermediate activities. The sense of place of the site then is either imposed through institutional constraints and conditions, or is completely contingent on the patterns of peripheral activities. This results in the history of the site and its memory being contained only in officially sanctioned constructions (e.g. the Palace of the Parliament and the roads), limiting the range of possible meaning that can be derived from this landscape, as well as limiting place-making practices, and the possible range of lived experiences, to predetermined, formalized ones.

To fragment the site into a finer grain, to add constructions of a similar grain, or even to embellish it or remove the fence, opens up the possibility for improvement on the site, but ultimately would do little to transform its status, or to address its complicated past. The question of how to deal with the limits of the site, or with the framing of the site in order to regenerate the possibility of its own existence, remains.

To put it another way, the problematique of this contested site suggests that dealing with such a site is first a matter of reframing—of restructuring that which structures the site as well as its potentials—and only then is it a matter of design understood as the intervention and articulation of material and space.

Frame as tool for design

FIGURE 3 Site plan, Frame-of-frames. In its current configuration, the site framing is determined by the wall, which resonates as spatial delimitation both with the massive Palace of the Parliament, and with the residential blocks that outline the site's extents. This is further reinforced spatially by the three differing field conditions: Izvor park, to the north, the land enclosed by the wall in the centre, and an overgrown, but unfenced, field to the south, that unfolds in front of an (unfinished), large structure meant to be the 'House of the Academy'. Informed by the mapping of the site through its frames (Fig. 2), the current configuration of the site also has a number of quasi-frames - frames that once structured the site, but no longer hold prominence - such as the topographical ridge. In the speculative design project 'Frame-of-frames', the ridge is chosen as the frame from which to structure all other frames of the site, and its inflections become key components in this operation. For each of the inflections, a number of practices from the surrounding area are transposed onto the site. An infrastructure dealing with the height differences is introduced on the site, and new frames are set in place through the insertion of specific design interventions that function both as germs and gesture. These range across scales, and involve four 'gardens' that directly frame the ridge's inflections and activate them programmatically: a slow mobility path partially following the site of the wall, which links these gardens; an infrastructural grid that spans across all three fields, incorporating their territory into the site; and a wooded band that absorbs the building into a larger spatial logic, removing its prominence in structuring the site. To recall the mechanisms of framing outlined in the research, each framing component of the site—gardens, infrastructure, path, and forest—each takes on different roles in framing and reframing the site that vary across scales. For example, at the small scale, the topography is the inflection framed by the garden, while at the large scale the topography is what frames the larger site, and beyond that the topography is the vector that connects the continuous landscape at the scale of the territory. (Photograph by Alexandrescu, 2015, p. 80). doi:10.7480/spool.2016.1.1135.g1499

In order to uncover a territory's specificities, the frame as an analytical tool frames a site through the inclusion or exclusion of processes in time and practices across scales. This selection process is an act of design that identifies and deterritorializes components of the territory in order to reconfigure them. It can be thought of as an active reading of the site, having parallels to active forms of mapping (see Corner, 1999), which detaches specific components of a site, allowing them to recombine as new combinations and assemblages, and reterritorializes them back on the site.

As a design tool, the frame magnifies existing inflections to distinguish what makes the site specific into a recognizable place. A site's particularity stems from the particular configuration of inflections, vectors, and frames, and this in turn has a particular way of being legible and available for encounters. If the frame is taken as only the materialized limitation of it, its specificity comes from the outside in, through the imposition of the limit. This, however, has the potential of allowing variations and fluxes, giving rise to new inflections (immanent specificities) or vectors (immanent tendencies). These are made evident and therefore legible by separation from the larger territory through a frame. To approach the frame as a cohesion would be to understand the inflections and vectors as specific, and the frame itself, that is to say the materialization of this cohesion of the site, as varying. These two approaches, thought of as gestures-deliberate delimitations that insert intervals, and germs, which fold the potentials of a territory into a cohesion, that can expand. Germs and gestures can then be deployed strategically within a landscapes' inflection, vectors, and frames in order to articulate, intensify, and elaborate aspects of that landscape into a specific site, capable of being meaningful without pre-determined meaning, and furthermore, capable of changing, growing and adapting without losing specificity. The result is the design of a place that can hold meaning without being fixed, and at the same time contain a multitude of specific sites-in-becoming (See Fig. 3).

Further steps

Once this expanded view of frame-framing is uncovered, it can then be used to determine a framework for approaching landscapes. A difficult site such as that of the Palace of the Parliament is useful in developing frame-framing as a tool because its fixed frame is large in scale and deliberately made and enforced, with lingering effects still visible to this day, making any kind of intervention necessarily require a new approach in order to not repeat past practices or results. But any given landscape can be seen as being made—either by professionals or through everyday practices—through similar framing processes. The tools for intervening in a way that is site specific yet open-ended, and uncovering a site's particularities (inflections) and tendencies (vectors) but allowing for a multiplicity of identities (frames) are also applicable to other landscapes. The lesson to be learned from this difficult site is not that frames—especially those legible as such—are always limiting and therefore do not offer value, but that they do influence certain things in certain ways, and it is important to negotiate when, and how, these frames are imposed. The frame thus becomes a tool for understanding and intervening strategically in a landscape to uncover first what it is that makes a specific site. It is a set of inflections and tendencies that allow certain practices and material configurations to emerge, read as a particular place through encounters that select certain inclusions and exclusions from the existing in order to give them a meaningful resonance.

This sketches an approach to landscape architecture that focuses on revealing a site-specific and site-derived toolkit for intervening onto different sites, while nonetheless structuring them in a contained way. It allows practices to continue, and weaves old and new senses of place into the specificity of the site, and

at the same time attempts to elude the fixing of a site into any new configuration. The specificities of this approach, through its capacity to unframe past frames and maintain this continuous possibility, attempt to ensure that this process can persist. This process necessarily requires deliberation, and therefore, the possibility for accountability for the actions undergone. A site is not given a priori, but made as part of a project to be constructed and reconstructed through place-making practices that it instigates, interrupts, and is interrupted by.

Summary and conclusion

As long as a design process maintains the same existing framework when approaching a site, and its components, the initial relations that structure the site are inevitably reproduced and maintained. By linking it to a large-scale topographical feature, the relationship between the site and the city understood as landscape is reconstructed around the landscape on a large scale. At the same time, topography is present across scales, liberating the site from metric and empirical scale. Furthermore, the possible qualities, elements, components and other deterritorialized sensations and effects are not necessarily bound by scale, allowing the reframing to act across multiple scales. Furthermore, this rethinking of the site has material effects beyond and before any built intervention is undertaken: it already affects practices/movements, which begin to gather traces and generate new interventions. This process of practices resulting from their environment and then transforming it is ongoing, and at the same time turning a site into a specific place. By anchoring the set of frames that reframe the site to topography rather than any built structure, whose scales and boundary are metrically determined, the site's dimensionality can be thought of topologically, which opens up the possibility for frames that link across the spatial hierarchies of existing frames.

Rather than predetermining the specific measures and interventions to be undertaken in a design, a frame-based approach to landscape architecture seeks to structure the understanding of the site, allowing for a site-responsive flexibility in the design, both for the reading of the site (in terms of analysis, as well as the setting up of the actual project's parameters) and for the practical intervention in it (design, strategy, tactics). This allows for a wide range of strategies, methods, and tools to be used as any given frame sees fit. As the frame of the project moves across scales, the interventions are able to remain contingent on the changing needs of the site or the users. The result is a dispersed set of contingent interventions that are nonetheless structured by a larger set of frames, and a structure that integrates them without limitation. Within this reframed landscape of frame in frames, transforming germs and gestures, it is the encounters - movements through it - the new milieus, which give it both its sense of place, and ultimately allows for its continual reframing.

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