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Walking Art and Relational Geographies International Encounters and Conference Girona-Olot-Vic, 5-9 July 2022

Body and mind, territory and community: walking is a very powerful tool of interaction that crosses cultures, human communities, geographical and human space, creativity and thought. A powerful tool that has brought together artists, geographers, anthropologists, researchers, historians, editors and creative people in an attempt to understand contemporary realities by walking and in a transversal way.

We had to wait two years to make this Encounters/Conference a reality as Covid19 caught up on the initiative in spring 2020. Nevertheless it was a pleasant surprise, at the end of 2021, to find all the agents of this project willing to resume the activity and since then we have worked hard to make it possible.

The International Encounters Walking Arts and Relational Geographies that have taken place in a transversal way in Girona, Olot and Vic, have highlighted the importance of establishing a dialogue between the theory and practice of walking, which makes this activity an instrument of territorial connection, a mapping tool and a creative expression format capable of being Shared by everyone.

The schedule was composed of two days in Girona, one day in Olot and two days in Vic. Attendees have been moving around the cities, and this also allowed, especially among the international community, to access the territory and to enjoy the complicity of the local population.

PROGRAM

The program included five mornings of presentations and five afternoons/evenings of workshops by artists (2 in Girona, 1 in Olot and 2 in Vic) . They are documented on the website <https://www.artdelcaminar.org> and on <https://walklistencreate.org/>
There were also three nights of artistic activity open to the general public, walking throughout the night, one on each city.

The online program complements the meetings and is run by the walk · listen · create platform <https://walklistencreate.org/>. The dates of the online program happen before and after the conference, and many activities will take place in September. It consists of audio papers , audio walks, online cafes and online roundtables with a global outreach.

DOCUMENTATION

The Encounters/Conference were documented by following means :

- Contents and program on the website <https://www.artdelcaminar.org>
- Contents, images and biographies on the event page <https://walklistencreate.org>

- Attraverso la Notte documented by Festival Sismograf <https://www.sismografot.cat>
- Photographic documentation of all activities
- Partial videographic recording of the presentation sessions in Girona and Olot
- Complete recording of the paper presentations in Vic https://youtu.be/cJt0P8P_0FI
- Partial registration of workshops in Girona, Olot and Vic
- Video report (in the process of editing)
- Press and networks documentation
- Memory

ATTENDANCE

The response to the call has been very good with a total of **103 people** participating at different levels:

- 43 papers presented
- 15 workshops, walkshops and artist presentations
- 4 keynote speakers
- 3 performers / creative proposals open to the public
- 26 attendees
- 12 participants in the working team

Everybody made a remarkable personal effort that demonstrates their interest. The organization granted the registration fee of artists who have presented walkshops and workshops.

A proportion close to 50% of attendees have stayed for the full period of the encounters, despite being a long meeting lasting five days. Most people has participated in both academic presentations and artistic workshops. The two formats have not divided people but the opposite: everyone has attended the various proposals and the program has brought artists and researchers together.

A converging community that already existed before as a small nucleus was strengthened and grew thanks to previous meetings (Made of Walking / WAC/The Walking Body) that took place in Greece Portugal, France and Cyprus, and a step has also been taken in the creation of an international network organizing future activities in different countries: Italy (Sardinia), France (Corsica), Belgium, Greece, Portugal and Catalonia.

It is also worth highlighting the great generosity of many people either local or International, welcoming some of the visitors in their homes, printing graphic material (notebooks) for the meetings, exchanging publications and art catalogs accompanying trips with their own vehicle.



CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of the encounters were made and agreed upon by all those present on the last day of the meetings at the Casino de Vic:

- The value of walking as a **revolutionary** activity, activating the body, feelings, and mind and its widespread and shared reality, and **subversive** by its nature of being free of any economic system because not needing more than the body, making people more aware, more connected with what and who is around them, more democratic as all walkers are equal, transgressive by making their own agency, and stimulating a critical attitude to any exterior knowledge or authority

- The **multifaceted importance** of walking in the urban planning of cities, the preservation of the landscape, the care for the body, the transmission of embodied knowledge, the exchange of cultures and the recognition of the other.

- The importance of **face-to-face** in the transmission of knowledge and the restoration, after the pandemic, of relationships that include face-to-face contact: these meetings have shown how face-to-face underpins the trust that is essential for learning.

- The value of our experience as travelers and walkers in terms of giving and accepting of **hospitality**. These concepts have become evident in walking and traveling, not only in the traditional local hospitality with travelers but also in the excellent results of organizing these itinerant days, thanks to the support which is shared with many entities.

- The catalan and international competence to work in a **network** and to maintain a long-term sustainable network, as demonstrated by our international work over the last 4 years and the most recent collaboration of local and international partners in Catalonia

- The importance of the point of view of **creative walking** and the **art of walking**, which, unlike mass tourism, recognizes that **every place is worth knowing and touring, every moment deserves to be lived with intensity, and everyone it is essential in building strong communities, capable of dancing, singing, walking, and writing their own history in freedom.**

Therefore, key words: walking as a revolutionary activity and multifaceted value, presence, hospitality, network and art.



ORGANIZATIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

TRANSVERSAL, INTERNATIONAL AND DECENTRALIZED NETWORK

The organization of the encounters has been possible thanks to a network work in different levels. On the one hand the international community, a network that includes several European countries (mainly Belgium, Greece, Portugal and Catalonia), and on the other the network formed by the collaboration of universities and public entities in transversal Catalonia, the Universities of Girona and Vic, two art centers of the Visual Arts Network, Olot City Council and other renal entities such as the Hospital of la Garrotxa or the Casino of Vic. We should also highlight the collaboration of NPO associations with government entities, a fact that is not common and that we consider very positive.

DISTRIBUTED BUDGET

The budgetary weight of the encounters has been quite distributed. This has allowed the economic effort not to fall on any single entity and has fostered cooperation. There has also been a very good distribution between economic resources and resources in species that has been based on the potential of each collaborating entity.

The monetary budget has been financed as follows:

- Universities and public entities 65%
- Independent Artists Association (Nau Còclea) 35%

To these amounts must be added transfers in kind:

- Conference spaces at UdG, Hospital d'Olot and UVic
- Festival Sismògraf funding Attraverso la Notte of Marsala Collective.
- Coordination work in the three entities
- Coordination work of various members of the international community
- Curatorial and scientific committee work
- Extra office work, coordination and management at Nau Còclea

WORKING TEAM

Project and general coordination: Contemporary Art Center Nau Còclea.

Project management: Geert Vermeire and Clara Garí

Project development, curatorial and content work, scientific-artistic committee: Juan Nogué, Pere Sala, Herman Bashiron Mendolicchio, Yannis Ziogas, Miguel Bandeira Duarte, Natacha Antao Moutinho, Anna Luyten, Ton Granero, Babak Fakhamzadeh and Andrew Stuck

General coordination: Helena Febrés

Coordination: Yolanda Cousillas (UdG), Laura Puigbert (Landscape Observatory) Tena Busquets, Kena Rodriguez Kuhn (Arts Escèniques Olot), Joel Piqué, Anna Prat (Olot Hospital Foundation), Roser Silva Navarro, Montse Simon, Montsita Rierola (UVic) Maite Palomo (AcVic)

Support for artists: Tuti Cirera, Jordi Lafon, Eva Marichalar

Documentation contents: Babak Fakhamzadeh and Andrew Stuck

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Organized in collaboration with:

Chair of Geography and Territorial Thought of the University of Girona, Bòlit Center for Contemporary Art of Girona, Landscape Observatory of Catalonia, Education and Culture department Olot Townhall, Hospital of Olot Foundation, Festival Sismògraf University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia, Deriva Mussol, ACVIC Center for Contemporary Arts, Vic Casino, walk listen create (Belgium) Made of Walking (Belgium).

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