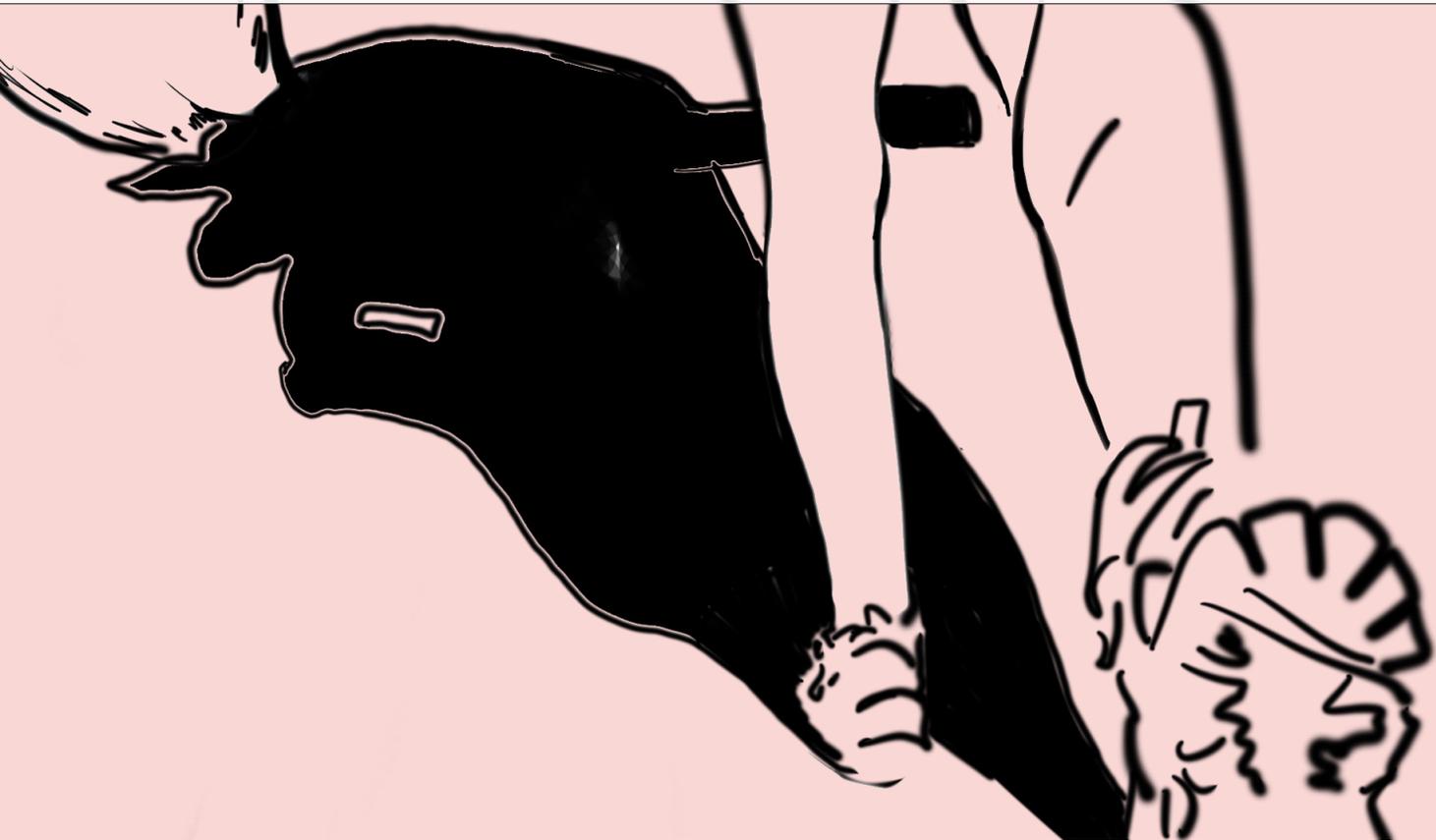# PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSITIONS

Playful Walking

WITH A/R/TOGRAPHY

BOOK 2: ESSAYS

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Acknowledgements and Copyright

≡ Contents

Steps

Steps

Introduction by Zohreh Valiary Eskandary

The concept of Steps unfolds as an exploration in the following three chapters that collectively weave a narrative on the transformative power inherent in the act of taking steps, both metaphorically and literally. The first chapter, "The City-Text Metaphor," sets the stage through a metaphorical comparison between city walks and reading a text. Drawing from Roger Chartier's insights, the authors view the city as a literary work, encouraging creative interpretations of urban spaces. The chapter introduces the city as a subject and explores the urban walker as an active reader. Within the a/r/tographic methodology, the article navigates the creative process of the artist, teacher, and investigator, that involve different tools to visually represent and interpret the urban space. The second paper, "Walking Without Arriving," extends the exploration into the realm of pedagogy within a/r/tography research. Morimoto proposes the suspension of arrival as a methodological approach, drawing inspiration from the meandering Shinano River and the practice of slow scholarship. The concept of arriving with/out arriving becomes a commitment to potential, a continuous engagement with the unknown, and a form of slow scholarship that allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in the research process. The last chapter of this section enriches the discussion by focusing on time, liminal spaces, and the entanglements of identity. The authors invite readers to engage with steps as a process of research-creation, an active pedagogy of self, and a means to be present in various dimensions simultaneously. Together, we navigate the winding paths of personal and professional growth, acknowledging the challenges, celebrations, and the impact of intentional steps on our individual and collective narratives. Steps, thus beckon us to embrace the ongoing dance of transformation, where each stride contributes to shaping our understanding of self, others, and the world around us.

From Figure 4: *Photo frame 17.0. Sample series composed of four gif video photo frames City Chaos* proposed by Yaneth Plazas Miranda, 2018, (Image credit: Edward Jimeno Guerrero Chinome).

URBAN PALIMPSEST: READINGS, WALKING AND IMAGES OF THE CITY. AN A/R/TOGRAPHIC PROPOSAL TO INVESTIGATE THE CITY

Edward Jimeno, Guerrero Chinome, & Rafaèle Genet Verney

Introduction: The *City-Text* Metaphor

Everyday experiences and urban walks of city inhabitants are invisible actions that are amply presented in the urban panorama. Understanding a city and constructing a perspective on it are complex tasks with respect to both creative practice and artistic education. On a metaphorical/conceptual level, we could say that walking through the city could resemble reading a text. The investigation will begin with the exercise of editorial design to demonstrate everyday urban experiences, where texts, images and charts are ordered to produce an object book.

To this purpose, *Studies on Written, Literal and Historical Culture* by the French historian Roger Chartier (2006) is referenced. In its historiographic analysis of the object book, three agents are considered: the text, the reader and the practice of reading. These elements are conceptually transferred to actors that intervene in the public space: the city, the passerby and the urban walk.

The text, understood to be a combination of language codes, is replaced by the concept of the city. The city as a text becomes a system that allows the passerby to weave his or her own meaning and interpretation of the urban space. Reading the city cannot be limited to architectural constructions or elements of the urban landscape. The city is more of a subject than material, as explained by Mauricio Tenorio (2004) in his book *The Urbanist*. Moving around the city is not just going from one place to another; it is living within it and making its existence possible. The city is a literary work that incorporates fragments of everyday life wandering through the streets at specific times and places for each passerby. These fragments have an aesthetic substance that can be represented through artistic images and thus reveal the presence of these urban displacements.

The reader is understood as the urban passerby who displaces himself or herself around the city. Just as a reader encounters a text, so does an urban passerby encounter a city. In this relationship, the reader-passerby maintains constant communication with the *text-city* and establishes an active dialogue by setting his or her own journeys (Silva, 1992). The encounters with the *text-city* allow for the urban image to be tested in an unanticipated way and also to be found without having been lost (Buck-Morris cited in Brea, 2005, p. 154). The interpretation derived from this encounter converts the reader

into a powerful interpreter, composing a narrative substance laden with social and cultural elements in constant interaction.

Finally, the urban walk is understood like the practice of reading. Through this practice, the passerby reads the *text-city,* defining a unique city discourse. The urban displacements are like a type of negotiation between the reader and the text, using images as the channel of interchange, elements that trigger the combination of the smooth (routine) and the fluted (thinking, accidents) in the city space (Deleuze & Guattari, 2002). There are diverse forms of everyday practice, such as urban walks, bicycle journeys, bus trips, and the like. Reading the city generates urban perspectives derived from the interpretation of present images of displacements in the public space. Through these experiences, this investigation hopes to create an *object-book*: a palimpsest that gathers distinct readings of the city.

Trace, Composition, Perspective: A Creative Process

In the a/r/tographic methodology, the practices of the artist, teacher, and investigator are simultaneously researched. The educational experiences in this project are as follows: everyday actions are taken for analysis in the classroom, investigative analysis within the arts is favored, and creative experimentation is proposed. A/r/tography as a methodology is understood as a life practice, and consequently, the practice of developed investigation in pedagogic spaces is not oblivious to the artist's creative experiences (Irwin, 2013). This approach is similar to the method guiding this investigation which uses the creative editorial process as a point of reference to teach about the city from the sphere of artistic education. Editorial design is thus established as a creative discipline, as the field of action for this investigation, and is orientated with artistic education.

The use of a/r/tography as a methodology within the urban context allows for one to pay attention to the extraordinary experience of everyday experiences as the subject of investigation. It pedagogically opens spaces for the creation of stories and installations, promoting flexible interconnected networks among participants in an experimental way. Aesthetic relationships are also discovered, where time and space are inseparable and where present analyzed actions contain fragments of the past and

future, invoking memory. A/r/tographic methodology can modulate political, social and cultural elements as triggers for artistic creation. A/r/tography makes use of dynamic processes that mix the material nature of learning with the aesthetic nature of creation and investigation. These processes make it possible to connect vital (life) experiences with images and text, offering an ample margin of understanding that can encompass the concrete abstraction of these experiences. The parallel lines of a/r/tography that indicate the separation of its components (art, investigation, and teaching) are the boundaries where the pure potential of knowledge is located, where extraordinary acts of creativity and sensibility become necessary and possible (Triggs et al., 2010).

Using this methodology and in agreement with the metaphor established between elements of both the city and text, the scenarios of investigation through creation are explored, proposing a strategy to generate new knowledge based on the construction of artistic devices (Ballesteros & Beltrán, 2018). This investigation employs the rigorous creative process of editorial design, proposing three flexible stages of creation; a) tracing, b) composition, and c) perspective. Reading is established as an analyzable phenomenon, questioned and reflected upon, on which visual investigation is used to find an artistic representation.

The first stage in the process is to identify oneself with the name of the 'Trace.' It is characterized as the registered space of the found material on the contemporary urban drifts, where triggers are found that form key ideas in the investigation about the reader-passerby, the practice of *reading-urban-walk*, and *text-city*.

The second stage in the investigative process is 'Composition' and corresponds to the analysis of the gathered documentation in a series of images, consolidating feelings and experiences. The elements are classified, selected and edited after questioning.

'Perspective' is the third part of the process. It is the space for the generation of creative devices and artistic interpretation. In this phase of reading the city, urban representations based on everyday displacements are suggested, and distinct possibilities are discussed in order to understand occurrences based on visual elements.

Figure1: *Construction of meaning: Urban Walk.* Visual Map, 2019 (Image credit: Edward Jimeno Guerrero Chinome).

construction of meaning
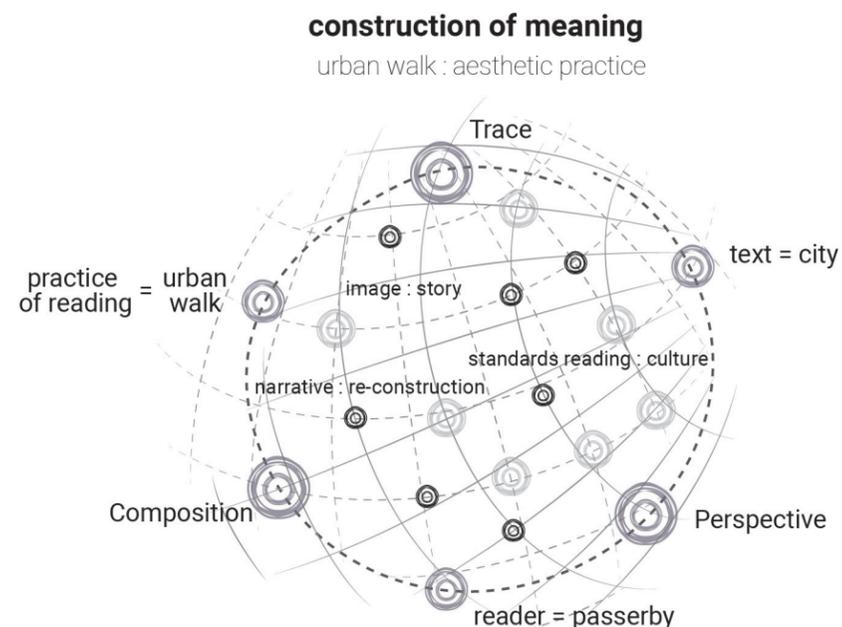urban walk : aesthetic practice

Figure 1 demonstrates how 'Trace, Composition, and Perspective' are three elements of a rigorous creative process that maintains rhizomatic attributes (Deleuze & Guattari, 2002), allowing elements from different stages of work to be linked. This creative/processual metaphor allows us to relate different aesthetic experiences that take place in the urban space from different fractions of time; these temporalities can refer to moments of memory, imagination, or the active practice of urban displacement and are connected in a rhizomatic way to understand the city. The ensuing educational experiences follow this train of thought. These show the possibility of understanding an image of the urban space from displacement in the public space. Different instruments are utilized to strengthen the investigation and the creation of the artistic experience; these can be easily applied in other pedagogic environments.

A/r/tographic Experiences

Story-Image
The image becomes a powerful tool for investigating/teaching about the experience of the aesthetic. "There is always an image that teaches, even in a momentary abstraction of thought or action arising from one's embodied experience" (Triggs & Irwin, 2019, p. 2).

The *story-image* emerged from everyday actions in resonance with the urban image. The passerby experiences this relationship, sending us aesthetic factors whose time between the lived moment and the narrated moment resides on a sociocultural axis.

The *story-image* acquires shape through the diction of subjective elements, which enrich the narrative action concerning the urban event. "Through reading, the series of occurrences are recombined in the memory of the reader to stay ordered as a sequence that has consequences" (Pimentel, 2000, p. 11). Therefore, in the *story-image*, the passerby creates consciousness by acting in the urban space through speaking.

The readings of the *text-city* have a metaphorical character; they are made based on other readings, and their similarities are quite flexible. The *story-image* is the instrument used to communicate the experience of finding the urban image based on a key occurrence that captures the attention of the passerby. The reading connects elements in nonlinear time, showing changing thoughts, transformations and alterations from the urban walks.

The *story-image* characterized by linear narration or nonlinear occurrences refers to the figure of the hypertext, understood as the capacity to share, add, and connect information through non-sequential structures and displace them to different contents (Scolari, 2008). In this way, the *story-image* is a hypertextual structure that moves us closer to the aesthetic experience of the passerby in the urban environment. The *text-city* is presented to the reader as the space where links are established nonlinearly, connecting different levels in one´s memory.

As an example, we can see the following *story-image* that derives from an aesthetic experience lived by the passerby/researcher in the middle of the urban space. The *story-image 22_11_2012* (Figure 2), is characterized by the accidental encounter of the reader with a visual phenomenon. The numbers in the title refer to the day in which the event occurred: the encounter of a foreign passerby with a 'mobile bakery,' something that is quite common on the streets of Toluca, Mexico. The visual narration describes the commercial dynamic of the event observed by the bystander reader. The investigator made a visual transcription as a typographic illustration, where the sum of the characters graphically identifies the verbal nature of urban grammar. The proposal by itself shows a possible *graphic-narrative-artistic* interpretation, representing an approximation to the

mental space of the city. Thus, the *story-image* enables the possibility of making sense of the unexpected and/or fortuitousness of the urban socio-cultural dynamic.

The construction of images from everyday actions recognizes the potential of the instants lived during the urban experience. As a visual result, it corresponds with the role of the image and its responsibility in pedagogical environments by a/r/tographically engaging in teaching and learning at the same time from an aesthetic/artistic action (Triggs & Irwin, 2019).

Conversation-Image

In this investigation, we also use the *story-image* as a methodological instrument. Based on conversations carried out on the internet, a series of typographic illustrations were created. The software allowing for the cyber chat was the medium for the interchange of electronic messages. In this exercise, the questions, responses and commentaries travel at imperceptible rates, allowing for coincidental encounters, putting a new communication concept, "a succession of misunderstandings" (Greimas in Scolari, 2008, p. 24) into play, with the possibility of generating new interpretations.

The visual proposal (Figure 3) reflects the vision of the urban reader without considering the specific geographic space where he or she is. The investigator tells an imaginary occurrence about the place of the interlocutor. Each conversation contains phrases with some orthographic discrepancies, demonstrating the everyday nature of electronic writing and alluding to the unique interpretative character of the reader in support of the appropriation of public spaces. This appropriation is complemented by the name and date, which are graphically highlighted elements of the proposal.

This exercise accentuates the concept of 'negotiation' by Chartier (2006), between narration, conversation, typography, graphic lines, feelings and the practice of reading, visual elements, everyday nature, images, memory, and the like, revealing different layers of reading that constitute the artistic creation of a *text-city* and defining a form of thought. In the following visual constructions that maintain the instrument of the *conversation-image* as their origin, some urban passers-by located in different cities around the world participated, and they voluntarily built the visual representation

of the urban experience with the researcher. This sample is part of a total of 7 visual constructions generated in 2014. The instrument continues to be replicated in other academic exercises, proposing the construction of new visual devices based on conversations that students have with people outside the classroom about the conception of urban spaces, daily routines, and/or visual events, among others.

City-Gif

Both the *Story-Image* and the *Conversation-Image* were instruments presented to the students in the elective class, *Animation and Audiovisual Composition for New Means of Communication* in the University Corporation Unitec, Bogotá D.C., with the objective of stimulating a proximity to reading the urban space. The word "laboratory," "a space equipped with the necessary means to undergo investigations, experiments, and work of scientific or technological nature" (RAE, 2019, n.p.), describes the experience, an open stage favoring the encounter of different forms of thinking and constructing images. These encounters were materialized in a collaborative space between the teacher and the students, where they could think, discuss, and sculpt the image in movement.

The class, as a laboratory of artistic creation, maintains an arts-based investigative focus, where knowledge originates from plastic practice and its posterior reflection, clearly demonstrating and divulging investigative conclusions and/or results to an audience (members of the group). In this way, the creative process gains importance as a genuine method of thought and a free creative space, attributed to characteristics and styles of the *investigator-creator* while discussing new forms of thinking and doing (Ballesteros & Beltrán, 2018). This posture validates the developed processes in the laboratory/classroom as a subject for investigation by the creative disciplines.

Thus, the *City-Gif* project is constructed around urban thought and its representation through images. Like as in a workshop, the attributes of the city connected to the aesthetic experience and living in the everyday space are tackled. Throughout the entire process, the students were encouraged to undergo conscious urban walks, in which visual communication proposals of their interpretations of the transited spaces were established. The walks were associated to the way we think, discover, write and re-write the city.

Figure 2: *Story _ Image 22_11_2012.* Visual essay composed of two typographic illustrations of visual stories 22_11_2012. Daniel, a mobile bakery, 2019 **(Image credit: Edward Jimeno Guerrero Chinome).**

Figure 3: *Conversation _ Image 22_11_2012.* Visual essay composed of two typographic illustrations *Jose Quinche, Prologue…* and *Marisol Chinome, City - book.* 2019 (Image credit: Edward Jimeno Guerrero Chinome).

In this practice, the *gif* instrument was used to visually represent displacements in the public space. Animated elements in *gif* format favor communication of visual narratives due to the flexible movement of images, with the help of shape and color. The students argued about the identifying characteristics of animated images, exploring questions like the sequentiality of the image or *buckle*, a cyclical representation of an event (Manovich, 2005). The students appropriated the *gif* as a visual tool for graphic narration of the everyday urban experience.

Creative acts are based on experimental exercises with animated images: stop motion, cut-out, and cinematography, emphasizing concepts related to the city. These were accompanied by narrative exercises. The final device was the execution of an animated *gif* whilst walking through the city (Figure 4), defining some very precise characteristics of photography and video. The conceptual content should link the concept of city space to the displacement experience through the public space. Some exercises were published on social networks, allowing for the extension of these proposals outside the classroom.

Artistic Object City-Mental City

In this experience, the displacement through the urban space is epitomized in the *investigation-creation* mechanism and synthesizes in an artistic way the research *Urban Routes, keys to re-construct the city* (Guerrero, 2014), where the relations of the image in the urban space, the visual accidents, the systems of artistic thought, the editorial process as a creative process and the interpretations of the reading of the city are investigated. In the development of the research, the book as a concept was interpreted as a place of knowledge. In this way, the traditional concept of books as objective elements consisting of sheets of paper was supplanted and gave way to an artistic interpretation with a palimpsest structure; a city space was represented through an open box of four sides, two internal and two external. Using this perception, here we present a book of 178 pages, where each action undertaken in the process is identified as one of the pages of a traditional editorial piece.

The artistic installation is composed of subject matter taken by students reading the city, in the *Didactics of Plastic Arts* class at the University of Granada. They were urban

Figure 4: *Photo frame 17.0.* (2018) Sample series composed of four gif video photo frames *City Chaos* proposed by Yaneth Plazas Miranda, 2018, (Image credit: Edward Jimeno Guerrero Chinome).
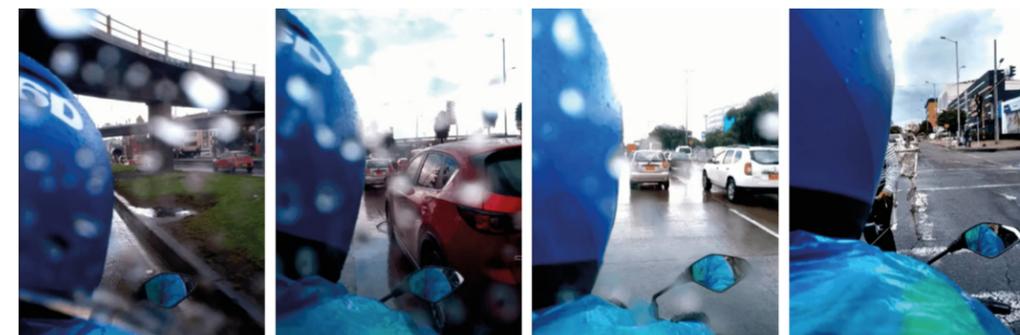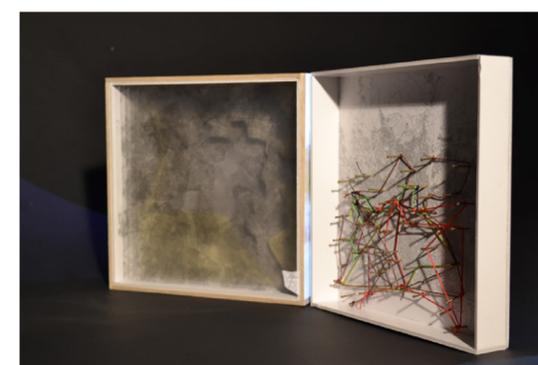

Figure 5: *City space*, Visual essay composed of two photographs of the project, *The City, A Mental Space, 2014* (Image credit: Edward Jimeno Guerrero Chinome).

passersby in the city of Granada, Spain or citizens of other cities who participated virtually. The experience was reconstructed by the investigator/educator/artist in an a/r/tographic way, establishing a link between the readings and the objective construction of the proposal.

One of the internal faces of the object contains a physical cartographic exercise compiled from a series of paper maps of the city of Granada, Spain, where the students extracted the part of the city they knew. They selected ten maps with holes, randomly placing them one on top of another. The arrangement allowed for the reconstruction of the cartographic piece of the unknown city with different layers of text.

Meanwhile, ten people who were unfamiliar with the city of Granada were summoned to do an imaginary exercise in this geographic space. Each student was sent an electronic message of a photo of the map used by the other students, accompanied by a list of ten actual places in the city. They were asked to trace imaginary routes and make short textual narrations of their proposals. With these tracings, the other internal face of the box was created, a virtual cartographic exercise composed of colorful threads, identifying each of the indicated paths.

In another phase of the process, the investigator physically walked by the places given by the participants in the virtual exercise. In these places, the urban passersby were asked to visually register Granada with a photographic camera, reconstructing the urban space from the point of view of another. This experience was registered in a textual narration entitled *Page 160* (Guerrero, 2017, p. 110). With the photographs obtained, panoramic images of the spaces were made using *visual media* (Marín & Roldan, 2014) as a composition instrument, a technique that allows for the superposition of images constituting a visual intersection.

A layer of images in the movement was added to the exercise; the investigator registered a sequence of videos in real-time of five points in the city, using blurred images as a graphic style to open interpretation to the observer by creating a palimpsest. Both the panoramic compositions and the video register were projected onto two external faces of the artistic installation. Finally, the closing page of the book identifies the artistic proposal´s moment of exhibition. The book was displayed on a pedestal and presented layers of text about an unknown city, both real and imaginary.

The installation entitled *The City, A Mental Space* (2014), brings together reading the urban space from different viewpoints. Its representation makes use of the image, narrative, and plastic exercise. On the other hand, it also indicates the possibility of constructing knowledge through investigation, pedagogic exercises, and creative-artistic practices.

Conclusions: City–Palimpsest

This investigative project establishes grammar for interpreting the *text-city*, just as it investigates and proposes instruments and methods favoring comprehension, analysis, and representation through the practice of reading the urban walk. The visual results become Palimpsest devices with hyper-textual structures, an accumulation of readings and visual and aesthetic information that connects memory, subjective experience and daily practices, which maintain remnants of previous readings made in non-linear times and spaces, activating the re-construction of urban space. In the middle of the process, editorial design as a discipline provides tools for the construction of the visual material. On the other hand, the investigation generated some key points that the reading of the *text-city* continues to analyze using artistic creation, investigation, and teaching.

Key N.° 1: The image is a knowledge construct. In the city, some events affect the passersby´s routes and occur accidentally within everyday routines. Each of these alterations that emerge in everyday actions can be understood with images. When an image is referred to as an event, it is possible to speak of it amply, taking it beyond the mere visual, relating it to the experience, and converting it into a link between concepts and reality in order to fix an aesthetic urban posture. Thus, the image becomes the possibility of establishing a dialogue with the city. Strategies like those of Kevin Lynch (2008) with his concept of paths, edges, neighborhoods, nodes, and boundary markers to categorize the urban image are established as methodologies to investigate the city. In this analysis, we try to categorize the image through moments (accidents), registers (captures), and hypertexts (stories), constituting units of memory and placing the image as a regulator of the urban walk experience.

Key N.° 2: <u>The city is a mental space.</u> The reconstruction of the city concept allows for the configuration of a perspective from multiple viewpoints. In this case, meaning is formed from a constructed network because of the presence of the image in the urban experience. The substance of this construction is so abstract that structures of perception and thought of the passerby are indicated, allowing for the placement of oneself in the environment and the generation of meaning with the space (Agusti, 2005). Therefore, individual relationships of the passerby based on his or her city experience contribute to the production of the contemporary city´s collective space, characterized by social, political, and aesthetic tensions, according to Lefebvre (Martínez, 2015). Thus, to speak of the city as a mental space is to understand a unit of rhizomatic meaning with an undefined center, where the elements of the urban experience connect in different times and places like a complex network of thought.

Key N.° 3: <u>The urban walk is a way to interpret the city</u>. Tracings like those of the plaque *Val Camonica - Bedolina*, or the community itineraries of *Warlpiri* – Australia by Aboriginal societies (Careri, 2003), reflect the intention of thinking about everyday transitions and relating them to the visual image. On the other hand, practices like *Deriva* by the Situationists or *Transurbancia* by Franceso Careri (2003) account for the intention of considering methods to think about and teach the city, where the passerby comes closer to cultural interchanges and finds visual phenomena from everyday exercises. The urban walk is an instrument that allows the passerby to find meaning in the text-city, keeping peculiarities that occur in the public space in mind. The individual perspective of the transited space is determined by a complex network of connections constructed by the passerby, deconstructing and reconstructing through his or her displacement, understood as an aesthetic experience based on occurrences.

The displayed a/r/tographic proposals are understood as evidence to link rigorous processes of *investigation-creation* and, in this case, to establish the possibility of thinking about the city and materializing experiences of the urban walk-through images. The city joins memory, visual occurrences and the urban experience. The experimentation and analysis of these topics in artistic teaching support the research of visual representation instruments, the discussion of current social issues, and the possibility of proposing new ways to do and think.

Experiences such as those worked from social networks in *Conversations-Image* or artistic devices such as the *Mental-City*, are powerful tools that enhance in the classroom the creative capacity and the solution of problems through visual artistic practices. Proof of this are experiences such as the *Gif-City*, where in addition to urban thinking and the conscious notion of displacement, they make students reflect on the importance of aesthetics in everyday life. The results generated in these scenarios provide the artistic teacher with the possibility of creating new visual devices, as well as broadening the instruments for the investigative and creative practice from the arts. Finally, we can say that Tracing, Composition and Perspective are ways of thinking about the categorization of the creative process in order to support the investigation, creation and teaching of artistic education.

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