Walking inCommon

A series of podcasts from the field

Learning from Perween Rahman. Walking inCommon is a set of creative collaborations that come out of my MA at the Center for Research Architecture. I have had conversations and interviews with practitioners in the field: artist, urban scholar, journalist, writer, academic. I use the situated/pedagogic learning of Rahman, the urban scholar and activist shot in Karachi (2013). Her method of the walking-map formed the basis for the OPP-RTI* to map the informal settlements and urban infrastructure of Orangi Town, Karachi. In her words, a map (for us) is like an X-Ray (for the doctor), which tells us the problem so we can resolve it. These maps developed environmental literacy and advocacy within the OPP community and beyond, to eventually support legal claims for land rights. Rahman was involved in a process of embodied mapping, which enabled her to understand the social and political relations, domestic and gendered spaces of the neighborhoods in which she was working.

By taking this model, I explore how ideas of a performative, embodied mapping allows for multiple ways of sensing the land and the body.

Through these podcasts, I place Rahman’s ‘voice’ in conversation with other voices; to draw lines from a field site and situate the collaborator; but also the work of Rahman within the intersection of postcolonial/ feminist and environmental justice struggles.

The guidelines for collaboration are a provocation/ prompt for the participant; a way to reimagine their own practice/research in relation to a specific site, geography, event, or memory.

Walking inCommon is an experimental tool that can be followed by others who wish to participate. Please downloaded from the online CRA Exhibition website (link)

*Orangi Pilot Project- Research and Training Institute (OPP-RTI)
Guidelines for collaboration

Locality / location Can you begin by telling us where you are standing. Describe the space; give us a sense of the texture of this place. Why is this location/site significant for you. Is it a particular moment which is important. What is your memory of this space, who did you walk with in this place. Is it an industrial site - a ruin - a site for demolition - a street crossing or a historic building.

Take your time to create the space; people listening don’t know where you are. There is no problem if you repeat things, it can be edited.

Sensory what time of day is it. What is the light, sense of the atmosphere, describe the temperature, is it humid, cold, frosty.

Can you record (20 sec - one minute) the sounds around you while you are walking. The sound of walking on gravel/through leaves, birds, the noise of traffic, the noise of people, in the demonstration, or a demolition site.

Respond Can you situate the walk / your position - in relation to the materials/ideas you are working with. How is this walk/specific site/location a response to the ideas you are thinking through. Is your response to this in the form of - a poem you are reading in that site or a set of sound recordings from your location.

Can you build on your knowledge/perception of this location in a way that is sensory and critical. Can you think of this as a situated testimony - speaking descriptively or conceptually – or simply as a situated gesture.

Condition How do you respond under the situation of the pandemic, does it make you rethink your practice. What kinds of coping mechanism have you developed.

In each city, there are a set of conditions that we are navigating: the lockdowns - limitations on movement - curfew timings (Karachi) surveillance app (UK) - the use of greater policing (Paris) - the imbalance in the racial statistics of those loosing their life - children and free school lunches.

> the above ideas are prompts to the collaborator, which may or may not be useful to think about
> Can you send a pin of your location (GPS) on whats app.