

# 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 download from the online CRA Exhibition website ([link](#))

\*Orangi Pilot Project- Research and Training Institute (OPP-RTI)

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## 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 losing 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.