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SCALING UP AND DOWN. LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROCESSES AND CHOREOGRAPHIC INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on *matters of scales* in the project Landscape in Motion, which involves creative research in the fields of landscape design and performing/digital arts. Landscape in Motion acts as an interdisciplinary inquiry into the relationship between urban infrastructures and the human scale, and it aims to define an innovative site-sensitive methodology for both urban design processes and site-based arts. Within the project, movement and dance act as a focal point to evaluate and highlight the social/environmental value of urban infrastructures. Integral to the project is the defining of an interdisciplinary lexicon as well as the development of a novel annotation system, 'score-maps'. Framed by a brief description of our developing methodology, the paper discusses the challenges and possibilities of crafting a system of multi-media representations that capture the scale of the human body and the larger site to inform both landscape design and choreographic creation processes.

INTRODUCTION

Landscape in Motion is a project that involves creative research in the fields of landscape design and performing/digital arts. The interdisciplinary project aims to craft an innovative site-sensitive methodology

for both urban design processes and site-based arts that takes into account cultural/aesthetic and environmental heritage. Key to the project is bringing into consideration the relationship between the urban/site scale alongside the human bodily scale, through the instruments of both landscape analysis and artistic inquiry. The richly layered neighbourhoods of Ramsay and Inglewood in Calgary, Alberta in Canada, offered an appealing context for our investigation. These neighbourhoods include dense interfaces between the city centre, rivers, cultural heritage sites, mobility infrastructures, industrial sites, brownfields and vacant lands. Human-scale residential and commercial fabric interfaces with the inhospitality and vast scope of major infrastructures and industrial areas, providing fascination for designers and residents alike. Currently, the city of Calgary is in the beginning stages of implementing the construction of a new Light Rail Transit (LRT) line that will profoundly transform the Ramsay/Inglewood area; as researchers invested in the cultural heritage of Ramsay/Inglewood, we sought to uncover a novel methodology for honouring the neighbourhood's heritage in light of the transformation.

This presentation highlights the scalar details of the project, Landscape in Motion, which aims to develop a methodological process and relevant lexicon via the creation of 'score-maps', an annotation system that captures the insights of the human body to inform both landscape design and choreographic creation processes (Dall'Ara & Kloetzel, 2021).

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Landscape in Motion prioritizes interdisciplinary inquiry to consider the relationship between major urban infrastructures and the human scale. More specifically, the project attempts to re-imagine urban infrastructures and their hardscapes as cultural and/or green infrastructures (Plieninger & Bieling, 2012; Czechowski et al., 2015) via the mechanism of the human body (Foster, 2010) and site-specific

performance (Pearson, 2010; Hunter, 2015; Barbour et al, 2019).

For the project, movement and dance act as a focal point to evaluate and highlight – as well as measure and conceptualize – the social/environmental value of urban infrastructures. Inspired by Land Art and the work of landscape architect Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009) and dancer/choreographer Anna Halprin (Halprin, 2011; Halprin & Kaplan, 1995), we utilize the artistic expression as a poetics for both site investigation and recording (Kaye, 2000; McPherson 2006), with the Halprins' "Motation" drawings offering an example of how diagrammatic representations can document, direct and depict dance-landscape interactions (Halprin, 1965; Halprin, 1969).

Using both spatial data (mapping) and experiential activities (on site surveys, and site-specific physical and aural performance methods), the project produces specific creative outputs, including digital landscape representation, score-maps, dance films (Brannigan, 2011; McPherson, 2006; Kloetzel, 2016), landscape meta-design for the site, and an online platform that interactively links the above-mentioned outputs.

A CROSS-SCALAR METHODOLOGY

Frequent journeys through Inglewood and Ramsay to consider the phenomenological properties of the areas revealed the need to narrow the options for physical investigation in order to guarantee an appropriate analytical depth for both the smaller scale of the human body and the grander scale of neighbourhood. Furthermore, the dialectic between different scales in this context offered particular appeal because of a seemingly osmotic connection between secret or micro-sites (hidden narrow alleys, local community art, installations or signs, etc.) and vast infrastructure spaces such as railway yards, major roads and highways. As specific sites surfaced for movement exploration – including a neighbourhood park (Jefferies Park), marginalized spaces along rail tracks in Ramsay, and a courtyard of the oldest brewery in Inglewood – a series of questions emerged as well: In what ways could we address the different scales of the project? Could the four-dimensional nature of both danced experience and landscape processes/perception be translated into two-dimensional mapping? How could we combine different dimensional sensations into a 'viewing' experience? And, critically, how could we enact a process and a mapping experience in a way that would not re-enact colonial imperatives?

Aware of the colonialist erasures and assumptions within mapping practices (Harley, 2001), and in order to address the role of *time* on site (Lynch, 1960; Kaye, 2000; Pearson & Shanks, 2001), we started to use the term 'experiential archaeology' to frame the mapping endeavour. We found this new term able to signify the

personal and experiential nature of being in place while also underscoring concepts developed within critical cartography, landscape architecture theory, site-specific performance theory, and dance studies that highlight the gamut of bodies that have traversed a site over time.

Framing the mapping project for the dance members of the research team around the anthology *Site Dance: Choreographers and the Lure of Alternative Spaces* (Kloetzel & Pavlik, 2009), the dance research team underlined four main concerns within site-specific performance: history, phenomenological and physical interactivity, aesthetics, and community relationships. By focusing (initially) on these four main areas and applying the concept of experiential archaeology, the dance portion of the team was able to combine their growing knowledge and impressions of the individual places through iterative experience with (what the team began to call) a 'light' flâneuse-style engagement that prioritized diverse experiences of a site across both time and a diversity of bodies (Hammergren, 1996). (Figure 1)



Figure 1: Dancers' map. "Environmental Dialogues".

As the dancers concentrated on personal experiences of site, the landscape architecture team employed the concept of cross-scalar 'double-glances', where 'small-scale' glances at proximity and detail joined with 'large-scale' glances at landscape systems and scenery (Dall'Ara, 2012). From this approach, the landscape architecture team developed a series of layered axonometric and perspective view maps to highlight key historical periods and landscape components of the area (Figure 2). The maps were shared with the entire team to assist with recognizing the evolving palimpsest of the three sites over time.

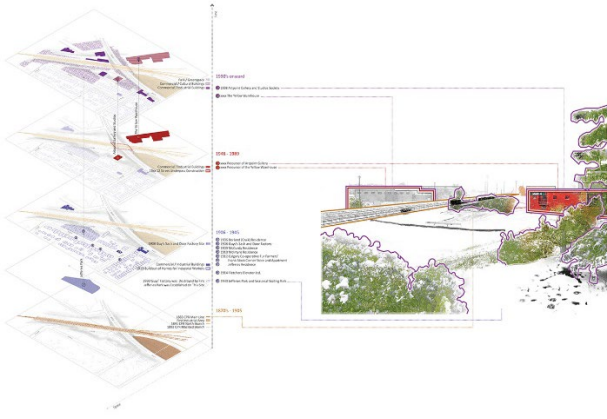


Figure 2: Landscape analysis maps. Crossing temporal and spatial scales.

As the research progressed, the team also met with community members (Robin Tufts and Jennifer Mahood) and with landscape ecologist Mary Ellen Tyler in order to flesh out diverse personal (and age-related) experiences of the site as well as the experiences of more-than-human (Abram, 1996) bodies – animal and plant ecology (Reed & Lister, 2014) – at the site. With such additional understanding of the site, the dance research team was able to create a series of action-oriented maps that focused on history (a timeline of gesture), phenomenological interactions between body and site, community, and more-than-human concepts (Kloetzel, 2019a); these action maps helped spur the creation of the final score-maps by the design team.

SCORE-MAPS AND SCALES

As the score-mapping process progressed, key parallels as well as critical differences emerged between the landscape design and site performance disciplines. While it was very clear that the essential dimensions of *space* and *time* figured significantly for both disciplines, we found that it was also imperative to capture the *action* and *quality* of action in order to communicate the movement components of the danced experience. As well, we wanted to develop score-maps that could honour both the site scale and the human bodily scale and provide visualization of the interrelationship and transitions between them. While *crossing through scales* and seeking *solidarity* (Corajoud, 2000) – temporal and spatial linkages – between various landscape components is inherently part of landscape design, the communication of the human bodily scale and of the body's motion on site still poses challenges in terms of representation.

Specifically, as iterations of the score-maps began to take shape, we faced the difficulty of 'simultaneously' highlighting the main landscape features that characterize the site (such as urban fabric, circulation infrastructure, topography, vegetation patterns, etc.) and

the human-environment interactions (including choreographic inputs such as background/foreground, kinesphere, movement pathway, level, and facing, etc.). Similarly, the challenges of the time dimension have demanded that we represent the longer-term temporal aspects of landscape processes alongside the much shorter temporal experience of human movement.

In order to offer this multi-scalar and cross-scalar approach for both time and space, the score-maps employ a system of multi-media and cross-referential representation, which allows us to capture the scale and the movement of both the human body and the site. Diagrammatic plan views act as a synopsis of the main spatial organization of landscape components, bodies, and actions (Figure 3), while perspective views more powerfully show the scenery and the *atmosphere* (Dall'Ara, 2021) of the place along with imagery of specific body-place relationships enacted by the dancers (Figure 4).

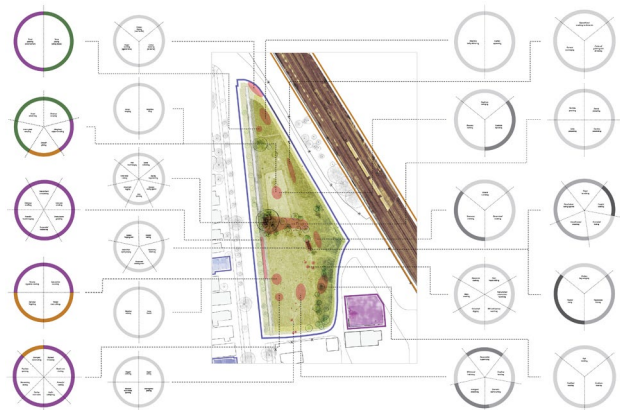


Figure 3: Jefferies park's score-maps. Plan view synopsis.

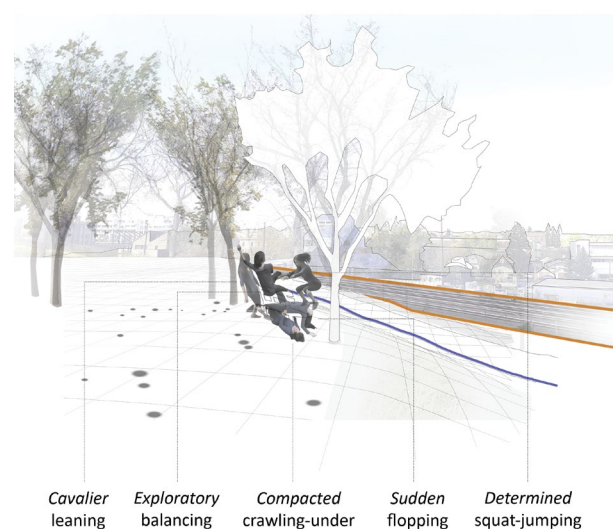


Figure 4: Jefferies park's score-maps. Bench area / Environmental Dialogues / Perspective view.

Other critical details of the score-maps include color-coding, which offers a method for sharing temporal aspects of era and age range, and collage techniques, which emphasize major landscape components of the site such as the historic rail line and vegetation patterns. Annotations that detail *key actions* by the dancers and the *quality* of these actions sit alongside others that highlight the presence and progressions of more-than-human beings in the environment that have inspired both choreography and landscape design. Finally, information on the actions and motion at the micro scale of the body (and body's parts) are further detailed through sequences of photographs (Kamvasinou, 2010) that represent individual actions and their respective *qualities* (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Jefferies park's score-maps. *Violent tumbling down hill*. Example of sequence of photographs to represent individual actions and their respective *qualities*.

CONCLUSION

In enacting this dialogical communication (Kloetzel, 2019b) between landscape analysis, movement analysis, choreography, filming, and landscape design, questions of scale come up repeatedly with dramatic effect on our various outputs. Kinesthetic information gleaned from the dancers' movement experiences in individual sites (and, on an even smaller scale, at specific micro-sites within individual sites) provides new lenses for interpreting and representing a context for landscape architecture purposes. Similarly, the analytical methods and contextual approach employed by landscape

architects offers insights that deepen choreographic creation processes on site. As the dance researchers have discovered, keeping in mind landscape analysis that references a site's design and functions (across time) as well as the site's relationship to the larger context can have an illuminating effect when applied at the scale of the body. Applying this constant perception and analysis at the macro scale, the dancers have uncovered an ability to more quickly delve into critical details of the site, developing choreographic ideas that maintain a perspective informed by larger understandings of the area (its functions, community, and flows) over time.

Likewise, the landscape architecture team now sees how micro-sites can be mobilized by the embodied movement experience, helping to inform design at the macro scale. The team has found that the dancers' interactions with the site and the micro-scale of their gestures/motion can bring up insights about the genesis of movements *from* the site and *in* the site. At this stage of the process, implications for subsequent design are not fully unpacked. However, this collaboration underscores that the value of little things, an appreciation of simplicity, and the potential of "minimal intervention" (Lassus, 1998) should not be overlooked within landscape design. As the fragility, beauty and power of the human body reveal, it is critical for landscape designers to create comfortable and welcoming spaces (at the human-scale) within the cities, spaces where cultural/societal values are embedded in the ecology of a place. Furthermore, the *quality* of the dancers' movement and their narration of the landscape as a poetic expression enriches the discourse in landscape design, offering a new understanding of the human/environment relationship. The micro-scale of the dancers' gestures, as if through a magnifying glass, also emphasizes key aspects of the landscape's materiality, showcasing its *grain* with greater detail, engaging tactility and other sensuous stimuli, and communicating the intensity of the landscape and of the *life* in the landscape.

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