American Anthropological Association
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Significant Walks: Synthesizing Qualitative and Quantitative Reflections on Movement and Place
Collaborative research team:

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    Musculoskeletal physiotherapy specialist (University of Brighton)

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    Artist & Digital Media Specialist (University of Chichester)

Dr Kambiz Saber-Sheikh
    Biomechanical engineer and Coordinator of the biomechanical research and teaching facility (University of Brighton)
Focusing on the act of walking the project involved working with 12 participants to explore

• the resonance of walking as a metaphor for understanding our individual place in the world

• walking as a part of our daily existence, providing opportunities to consider how we interact, navigate and respond to our environment

• walking as a measure of physical ability and wellbeing
Significant Walks Exhibition 2014
Darwin’s close friend and mentor, botanist Joseph Hooker, recounts how they often

‘...trudged through the garden, where there was always some experiment to visit, and on to the Sand-walk, round which a fixed number of turns were taken, during which our conversation usually ran on foreign lands and seas, old friends, old books and things far off both to mind and eye’

Familiar interpretive representations of pain

This person's pain is invisible, so is the pain that you cause when you do not believe me.

Not all pain can be seen.

Scale for pain intensity:
- No Pain
- Moderate Pain
- Worst Pain

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Smiley faces representing pain levels from 0 to 10.
Clinical representations of low back pain

Back pain can be Axial, Referred, or Radicular

Axial: left or right or both in the Lumbar spine

Referred: Pain referred from the lumbar spinal structures to the buttock and or leg unilaterally or bilaterally

Radicular: Referred pain via nerve involvement to the leg or legs accompanied with Parasthesia (pins and needles) or with analgesia (numbness)
As a group the team and participants considered Rebecca Solnit’s observation that...

Walking is usually about something else – about the walkers character or encounters, about nature or about achievement, sometimes so much so it ceases to be about walking.

Methodology = the combined use of inertial sensors & lightweight head mounted cameras that simultaneously gathered data monitoring posture, movement and acceleration data whilst walking
Participant walks
Participant walks
Participants used editing software to explore digital effects to interpret their individual experience of walking
By synthesizing quantitative and qualitative methods the research revealed where knowledge and reflection intersected, creating a series of micro journeys which manifests Doherty’s recognition of

‘situated practices’, suggesting a more fluid engagement with location and its discursive and social contexts’

The project acknowledges and reveals the porous, interconnected nature of seeing as a multifaceted physical and conceptual experience that includes

- Seeing what is visible
- Seeing what is invisible but present
- Seeing what is conceptually, or emotionally, understood
- Seeing a physical understanding of pain or sensation

And, crucially, reveals the interdependence of these modes of seeing.
Individual accounts spoke to the discourse that underpins Contemporary art practice, reflecting for instance Merleau-Ponty’s observation that

when we try to seize “sensation”...we find ... A formation already bound up with a larger whole, already endowed with a meaning.

Subject 02

Participant original point of view footage

Synthesized data & footage manipulated by participant

Subject 02 Female / Comparative Data

https://vimeo.com/174628928
Each of our walkers interpretive analysis of their personal circumstance also spoke to scientific or clinical understanding, visually articulating that

... pain is never just in the mind or just in the body. It is a complicated mixture of signals from the body and how the brain interprets them.

International Association for the Study of Pain 2013
I have come to see it as part of my everyday life
Overall the research outcomes bind science, art, participants and the viewer together, prompting a consideration of these daily experiences, not, as Henning observes, as a

‘single centred and disembodied ‘gaze’ but as part of a new visual practice which presumes an embodied viewer.’

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She is quick and I am cautiously treading

Subject 03 Female / Age: 46  
https://vimeo.com/200696636
Significant Walks suggests a new role for hybrid forms of media – reflecting what Mark Hansen considers as an evolving, digitally based world of visual experience where

‘the formal act of framing reality vacates the artwork of its Romantic trappings... [and] relocates the impact of the work squarely in the domain of experience, this is all in the service of a redemption of embodied experience: a renewed investment of the body as a kind of converter of the general form of framing into a rich, singular experience.’

I wanted to tell you, I am walking in an inhibited way as I have done for three years now.
http://significantwalks.com/