

The Port Lands Sensory Walk

by

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The Port Lands, situated minutes from downtown Toronto, is unexplored by most local residents. The landscape is industrial and post-industrial, made of shifting mountains of gravel and salt; nature has moved in where industry has moved out and recreation co-exists beside working cement plants. The objective of this interdisciplinary art project is to advocate for the waterfront district's unique character, shaped by the contradictory influences of industry, nature and recreation. This project builds upon notions of interconnectedness and emplacement espoused in the disciplines of art, cultural geography, and landscape urbanism. It explores how an artist with a walking art practice uses her method of multisensory investigation to advocate for a feral landscape.

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INTRODUCTION

The Port Lands Sensory Walk is an interdisciplinary art project investigating the practice of the walking experience as public art. The Walk engages the public in a multisensory exploration of the Port Lands, a contaminated district at the edge of downtown Toronto, and studies the impact of the artist led walk on the participants' relationship to this landscape. Using the raw, natural and industrial character of a brownfield facing redevelopment, The Port Lands Sensory Walk examines the effectiveness of public art walking as a method for advocating for protecting this strange, beautiful and harsh landscape.

Research Questions

The Walk project investigates walking as art practice, as artwork, and as a method for advocacy. Discourse in the disciplines of art, cultural geography, and landscape urbanism probes the value of attentiveness in knowing a landscape. This project interweaves and builds upon these elements to address the following research questions:

1. What is the efficacy of the embodied walking art practice?
2. What relationships might be produced as a result of a public art walk?
3. How might an interdisciplinary walking art practice be used as advocacy?

The Toronto Port Lands

The Port Lands is a district bordering Lake Ontario, located just four kilometres from Toronto City Hall. It occupies 880 acres south of Lake Shore Boulevard between Cherry Street and Leslie Street. The Port Lands is a constructed landscape, made from poor quality landfill consisting of sewer sludge and ash. It was once one of Lake Ontario's largest wetlands, but was filled in over several decades, starting in the 1880's. The Port Lands encompasses the mouth of the Don River and is a floodplain. Berms are located on Villiers Street and Commissioners Street to protect local industries. The district is industrial and recreational, and the natural elements claim territory wherever they can take hold. Feral is the word I use to describe the feeling one has here: this landscape is remote, uncontrolled, and left to run wild despite its central urban location.

The Port Lands is long-contested territory. A two-century debate revolving around the original Toronto Purchase agreement was settled in 2003 (Bellegarde: 2003). In 2010 a \$145 million land claims settlement was paid to the New Credit Mississauga Nation to make restitution (Edwards).

More recently, urban planners have fought over what should be done with this land. These plans have included an amusement park and a casino, both of which were turned down. Waterfront Toronto is the urban planning group that was given seed money by federal, provincial and municipal governments to develop and institute their vision for the breadth of Toronto's waterfront. Their Port Lands proposal includes a residential development in the northwest quadrant that is currently in the last stages of public consultation. In 2007 Waterfront Toronto held an international design competition to amend the Don River's flow into Lake

Ontario, which was awarded to Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates¹. The plans include cutting an additional, riparian channel into the existing landscape. This amendment will result in better flood protection for industry and future residents and add a new recreation trail along its shores.



Fig.1 Shipping channel - east view

Scale is a dramatic feature of the Port Lands. The landscape and its inhabitants range in size from grains of sand, milkweed fluff, cottontail rabbits and cruising gay men, to towering cottonwoods, coyotes, workers, and cement silos. Roads and trails lead to industrial, natural and recreational areas. Properties are barricaded by ubiquitous chain link fencing. The streets are rough due to weather and truck traffic, or are under construction where redevelopment necessitates new civic infrastructure. Weekday traffic includes industrial vehicles that give way on weekends and evenings to personal vehicles loaded with dogs, picnics, paddleboards, and fishing gear. Triathletes train on the roads alongside industrial

1 For more information, see http://www.waterfrontoronto.ca/explore_projects2/lower_don_lands



Fig.2 Sharing the road

traffic, appearing fragile yet holding their own.

Water is an important element in the Port Lands. The shoreline changes materially: beaches of rough sand and tumbled bricks lead to eroded land lined with demolition-sourced concrete. Cement walls drop into the lake along the working docks of the inner harbour. Shipping channels intersect the landmass, directing the Don River into the lake, and facilitating ship-borne deliveries and recreational boat traffic. Cormorants share the Portlands Energy Centre's (PEC) outlet channel with dragonboats, and fishing folk who catch and release carp that inhabit the seaweed.



Fig.3 Carp at PEC outlet

Local industry is oversized, interrupting the flat terrain with stacks, cranes and silos. Film and related industries fill monstrous buildings perched on capped contaminated soil, close to the Toronto Transit Commission's (TTC) Leslie Barns facility currently under construction. Canada Post and Toronto Hydro sit alongside municipal and private waste handling facilities. The landscape offers shifting views of industrial materials as they are piled, stored and consumed.

Port Lands industries have fouled land and water. Offenders like the oil tank farms have largely moved out. Their impact on the landscape is still visible: no smoking signs are posted on fenced properties that seem to host nothing but wildflowers and grasses.



Fig.4 No Smoking - Unwin Ave

Changing attitudes and public pressure are pushing industry to adopt more environmentally responsible practices. The PEC, a natural gas hydro generation plant, has a strong community outreach program and a stronger sustainability plan. Their sustainability measures include minimizing noxious emissions, hosting bee colonies, and establishing wetlands and a Carolinian forest.

Dave Hardy is the environmental planner working with PEC. I invited him



Fig.5 Dave Hardy and PEC bee boxes

to participate in the Walk. He accepted, and offered to lead the Walk participants on a tour of the PEC site. On this special edition of the Walk he introduced us to the forest and wetland he is establishing. Hardy also outlined his intentions to go beyond PEC borders, and stimulate neighbouring industries to follow their example, “I am interested in integrating the whole natural ecosystem along Unwin, with the Tommy Thompson Park, with PEC, and some of the other industries forming ecosystem nodes.”

Two businesses were recently established to address environmental issues: GreenSoils Environmental, established in the Port Lands in 2010, was the winner of a Waterfront Toronto pilot project to clean contaminated soil excavated from downtown development projects for reuse as landfill; Flax Energy grinds flax to make animal feed and cooking oil, and makes biofuels from the waste products.

A positive reason for industry’s continued residence in the Port Lands is the district’s proximity to downtown Toronto. The salt, cement and aggregate companies are suitably located near the construction projects they serve, saving



Fig.6 Strada construction rubble for reuse

on fuel and related emissions as the trucks travel a short distance to deliver their loads. Their products are efficiently brought in bulk by container ships.

Reclaimed construction rubble is recovered, stored, crushed and reused by Strada Aggregates. Reclaimed rubble is also trucked into Tommy Thompson Park (TTP) at the foot of Leslie Street. TTP is a world-renowned bird sanctuary that continues to extend its spit of land into the lake with this clean fill. The Toronto Region Conservation Authority operates the site, where they are establishing animal and fish habitats from the waste. It is an active construction waste dump on weekdays, and a recreational trail on weekends.

The Port Lands hosts a broad range of recreational pursuits. The majority of these occur outdoors, located in close proximity to industrial properties. Cherry Beach is a Blue Flag² beach where people swim, sail, paddleboard, windsurf and kiteboard. The Martin Goodman Trail, a mixed-use path, passes industrial sites and meanders through naturalized areas bordering the lake. It offers cyclists, rollerbladers and pedestrians a safe and scenic alternative to travelling on the

² “Blue Flag is a highly respected and recognized international eco-label. Blue Flags are awarded to beaches and marinas that meet strict criteria for water quality, environmental education, environmental management, and safety and services” from the website <http://environmentaldefence.ca/issues/blue-flag-canada> Accessed 13 September 2013.

roads. The Cherry Beach Sports Fields are elite level soccer and lacrosse fields that are busy three seasons of the year.

The natural character of the Port Lands is wild and largely untended, even in the parkland between Cherry Beach and Tommy Thompson Park. The Martin Goodman Trail passes through naturalized areas featuring tall grasses, red dogwoods, fruit trees and wild roses. There are hints of landscaping, but this stretch of waterfront is largely a mix of clearings and dense bushes. Animals and people share trails cut through the brush to reach the water's edge.



Fig.7 Dog walkers south of the Hearn

This zone allows for both solitude and social interaction. Dog walkers and hikers interact as they pass each other, but otherwise the atmosphere is dominated by natural sights and sounds like dragonfly swarms and the tinkling of lines against masts. The longtime gay cruising scene is active year-round in a territory covering about two acres. The impact on the landscape is made evident by well-worn “secret paths for secret meetings,” as one of the Walk participants described them. Springtime reveals communal efforts to clean up the grounds, when neatly tied garbage bags line the Martin Goodman Trail. First time Port Lands visitor and Walk participant Bev Crouse hopes that revitalization will “leave

enough pockets wild, to allow for animal life and surprises.”

There are unwelcome natural invaders in the Port Lands. Zebra mussels appeared in the 1980s. The recent arrival of stinging European fire ants west of the PEC outlet makes for an uncomfortable view across the harbour: their sting feels like a burning hot needle thrust into the skin. They are relentless and numerous. Gypsy moths have also become a problem. Their caterpillars defoliate trees, and can carry a fungus and a virus. When their numbers get out of control, the city institutes aerial spraying campaigns using the bacteria known as *Btk*. Another regular pest is the tent caterpillar, wrapping trees and bushes with large webs that protect their eggs and emergent larvae from predators. Toronto’s tree dump on Unwin Avenue at Regatta Road is fenced to keep people from transporting logs away, preventing the spread of termites and emerald ash borers.



Fig.8 Tent Caterpillars



Fig.9 Rabbit on the lookout



Fig.10 Redtail hawk

Most local flora and fauna enjoy their typical symbiotic relationships here. Hawks and rabbits keep vigilant watch for one another. Beavers live on the shore and take down large trees, constructing dens from the branches. Rabbits ring trees at the snow line in winter, surviving on the bark. Trees that die as a result of these actions decay, providing habitat for animals and plants alike.



Fig.11 Rabbit chewed bark

Methodology

The Port Lands Sensory Walk developed from the practice-based research methods of walking, mapping, landscape observation and documentation, and studio explorations; archival research; participatory action research and participant observation.

I undertook an immersive fifteen-month walking investigation of the Port Lands, visiting regularly to gain an intimate understanding of how it functions, to discover its dominant forces, and the interrelationships between them. There are different methods of walking, including purposeful walking that leads to a destination, and experiential walking that leads to discovery. My experiential walking method involved multisensory attentiveness that produces intensive knowledge of the landscape.

A sense of place is shaped by experiencing the rhythms and sensations produced by a landscape's interconnected forces. The attentive walking experience reveals how these elements form the landscape's character, and can inspire attachment to it. Port Lands Sensory Walk participants developed a new appreciation for the mixed use character of the Port Lands. Participant Peter Marmorek described the outcome of his walking experience: "The walk let me integrate the area more as a single idea."

Repetition and attentiveness inform our sense of place. Landscape scholar Paul Groth, author of *Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study*, emphasizes the need for in-depth fieldwork in addition to historical and archival research, and rapid 'windshield surveys'. He advocates for "detailed studies involving on-site sketching [and] mapping or systematic photography" (17).

I gathered spatial and visual information by mapping the Port Lands

through immersive observation and photography and video documentation.

Mapping was an important method for interpreting the landscape and learning its nuances.

Mapping revealed the diversity of the Port Lands, and the extent to which industry, recreation and nature shape it. I observed their interactions, noting how the dynamics changed with time of day, day of the week, and over the seasons. I learned that they exist both in harmony and in opposition to each other.



Fig.12 RCYC parking lot with boats and cars



Fig.13 Driving range and the skyline

In the Port Lands recreation is located along the waterfront. Some facilities blend in with their surroundings, others do not. The driving range and Royal Canadian Yacht Club (RCYC) on the west side of Cherry Street are shorn of natural features. The driving range's surrounding nets impede the Toronto Harbour skyline view, and the RCYC's broad parking area has the same appeal as the Audi storage lot across the street. In contrast to these recreational



Fig.14 Dragonboat club property



Fig.15 Beaver downed tree - dragonboat club

facilities, the Outer Harbour Dragonboat Club on Unwin Avenue occupies a naturalized plot of land south of the PEC. The club recently installed two trailers in an existing clearing without changing the landscape to accommodate them. (In contrast to the local beaver who felled a tree there last winter.) This small boating club and the others on Regatta Road provide intimate meeting places for like-minded enthusiasts, fitting into the landscape rather than dominating it.



Fig.16 Strada watering gravel

My inner four-year old appreciates the dominating scale of the industrial presence, but I am concerned about damage to the environment and potential health risks. I discovered industry's strategies to minimize dust at several sites: it was at Strada Aggregates and GreenSoils that I realized the purpose of the sprinklers and water reservoirs. My early impressions suggested misdirected sprinklers and contaminated holding ponds, but observation and experience revealed them to be dust mitigation systems. A frontend loader scoops water from the GreenSoils pond and dumps it on soil mounds, and Strada's sprinklers are purposefully aimed at sand piles and the lane to Leslie Street to reduce dust borne by the wind, and trucks exiting the facility.

These discoveries demonstrate what Groth means by his statement that, "spatial and visual information often sparks new and important questions,

suggested by oppositions and juxtapositions not apparent in written records” (17). This was knowledge I gained through experience; it prompted me to become more attentive, and not rely on first impressions.

In the early stages of walking and mapping the landscape, I photographed from a distance to record a broad perspective. The wide angle photographs revealed scale and the vast distance between the major industrial features.



Fig.17 Shooting wide view

I recorded the landscape’s slow seasonal changes and the rapid changes on Commissioners Street as the massive Cascades plant was demolished, turned into mounds of rubble and overgrown with weeds within three seasons.

In addition to photography, I documented the district with video in the early stages of my immersion in the Port Lands. I recorded video as I moved through its streets, discovering its hidden pathways, and learning the Port Lands’ big rhythms.

I then returned to slow, attentive practice, recording video from static positions. This footage made visible the rhythms of people, vehicles, wind effects, and soaring hawks. These fast, then slow methods of observation reinforced in me the importance of experiencing a landscape at different speeds in order to discover its constituent parts. Landscape scholar Christophe Girot describes the importance of this approach in his essay *Vision in Motion*: “A landscape seen in a variety of speeds and motions introduces a strong sense of relativity to our understanding of established identities. Recording behavior at different times of day reveals the multifaceted complexity of our cultural environment” (97).



Fig.18 Shooting intimate details

I moved on to more targeted observation and documentation, focusing on hidden and solitary places. I photographed the landscape's intimate details, getting progressively closer with each shot. This approach led to the discovery of hidden squatters' homesteads and mysterious homemade memorials. It also led me down the paths carved through tall grasses and tangled dogwoods where I found used condoms and wrappers, and rabbit droppings, the detritus of the gay cruising area.

To take a photograph requires being still for a moment. It takes time to compose the shot. Art historian Stephen Bann describes the photograph as "indexical, denoting that the artist has stopped for a while in that precise location" (12). Photography is not only indexical: looking critically through the lens narrows the photographer's field of vision and can reveal hidden dramas. As I focused on a boat through the trees, I found a shredded seagull carcass hanging in a tree. Bright red blood indicated the freshness of the kill, but did not answer the question of who or what had done it. Photographing this find was the only way to preserve it.



Fig.19 Sketch

I also practiced attentive observation by sitting down to sketch. Through sketching I discovered previously overlooked things like the visual rhythm of utility poles. The act of sitting and observing alerted me to small-scale sensations: how sounds changed and vines curled during the time it took to make the drawing. Sketching prompted me to pay even more attention to the individual sensations I experienced, and informed my decision to create the Walk rather than another type of artwork.



Fig.20 Pressed & dried plants, bones, shells



Fig.21 Industrial and other found artefacts

As I walked the landscape I discovered and collected artefacts, including industrial refuse and manufactured objects like broken truck bolts, rail spikes and a connecting joint, water-tumbled brick, and a DNA test found near the Green For Life garbage transfer station. The collection also includes natural elements: a raccoon skull, snail shells, pebbles, and plant samples I dried and pressed.

I kept the objects in my studio to maintain a connection to the landscape when I was not onsite. The collection is evidence of the interactions between the agents at work in the Port Lands. The wind blows garbage out of the transfer facility and spreads seeds across the landscape. Metal parts break off as they decay from exposure to rain and salt; water erodes bricks and rocks. Animals are killed by passing vehicles, or preyed on by one another.

Field notes, collecting and sketching added to my knowledge of the Port Lands. In my field notebook I recorded sensations and encounters I experienced,

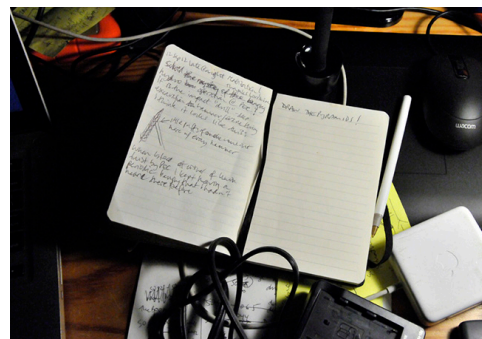


Fig.22 Field Notes



City of Toronto Archives, Series 376, s0376_00001_00005

Fig.23 Archives: Leslie St looking east 1895



City of Toronto Archives, Series 376, s0376_00001_00047

Fig.24 Archives: Dredge, Ashbridges Bay 189?

and changes I could not record with my camera. I can rely on my smell memory to recognize odours and to recall where I previously encountered them, but if I want to know what it smelled like on a certain day, the field notes provide the information I need. See Appendix B for a sampling of field notes.

To have geographical knowledge of a landscape is to understand its topography, its ecologies, its uses and the people who inhabit it. Building that knowledge through experience and research creates a sense of place. To complement my experiential explorations I referred to historical and contemporary maps, and Google satellite images to discover how the Port Lands had become the place I am exploring. In his important book *The Practice*

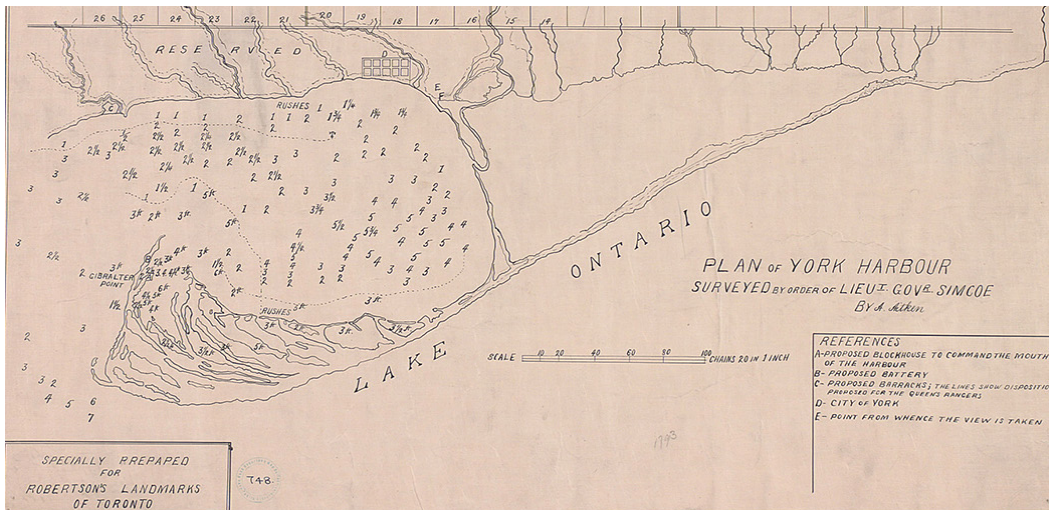


Fig.25 1793 Aitken Map



Fig.26 1893 Barclay Clark Map

of *Everyday Life*, scholar and historian Michel de Certeau says that the map “collates on the same plane heterogeneous places, some received from a tradition and others *produced* by observation” (121, emphasis in the original). He describes the map as “a totalizing stage on which elements of diverse origin are brought together to form the tableau of a ‘state’ of geographical knowledge”

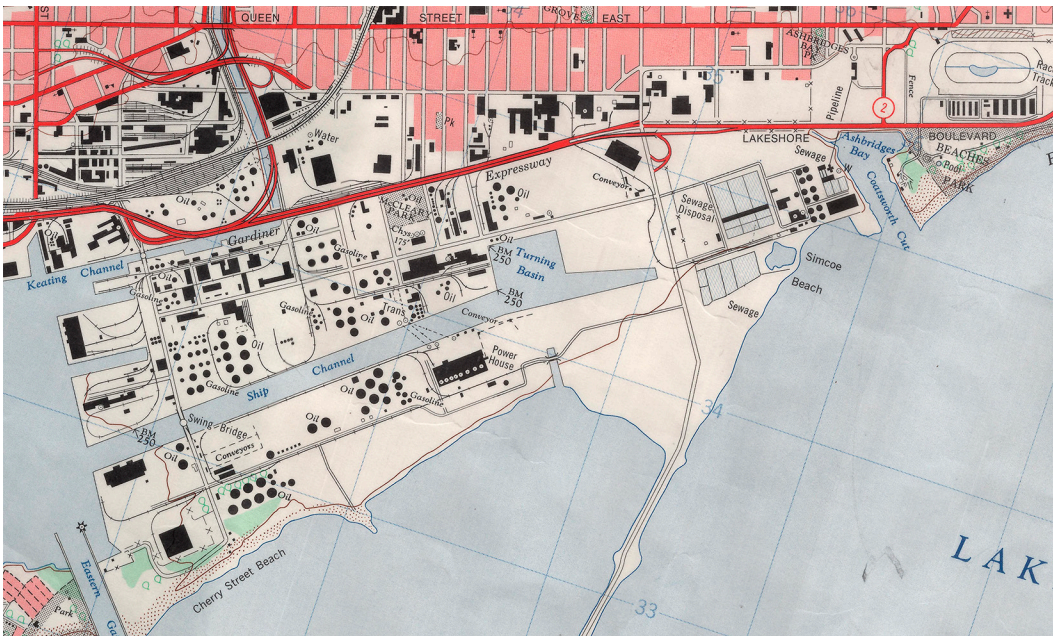


Fig.27 1975 Energy, Mines & Resources

(121).

Historical research included a trip to the Toronto Archives. Online resources were another rich source of data. Photographs and articles described the landfill process, and the construction of the railways and bridges. Research revealed the industries that established themselves on Cherry Street: Queen's City Foundry, Century Coal Company, and Lake Ontario Port Land Cement Company. The Government of Canada's Indian Affairs website detailed the complex history of the British government's dealings with the Mississauga nation, and the long process that led to resolving the problematic Toronto Purchase.

University of Toronto's online archive hosts a trove of relevant Toronto maps ranging from the late 1700's to the 1980's, a selection of which appear on these pages. The maps reveal how much the shoreline has changed since the late 1800's. The 1975 map shows the locations of the oil tank farms. There is one storage site still on location, at Commissioners Street and Cherry Street. Imperial Oil, Shell and Sunoco moved out in the 1980s, writing off the value of their lands to avoid liability for the contaminated conditions they left behind.

Researching current Port Lands issues yielded dozens of articles and essays detailing proposals and political debates about its future. I found comprehensive planning proposal documents generated by Waterfront Toronto.

Brenda Webster, Port Lands planner, provided further details about



Fig.28 Oil tank farm



Fig.29 Redevelopment notice

Waterfront Toronto's plans, historical background, and a land ownership map. I attended three public Port Lands meetings to learn which issues the district's stakeholders hold most important. Transit supporters want streetcars rather than buses to travel the proposed rights of way. LaFarge Cement wants assurances that they will not have to relocate. Environmentalists take issue with the decision to retain the straight and deep harbour shoreline. The original proposal reshaped the Port Lands' western shoreline to a natural undulating form, but was later revised to accommodate lakers delivering goods to Toronto's working docks.

In addition to the above mentioned research methods, the Walk itself was a research tool that involved participatory action research and observation.

The aim [of participant observation] is to experience events in the manner in which the subjects under study also experience these events. Sociologists who employ participant observation as a research tool aim to discover the nature of social reality by understanding the actor's perception, understanding and interpretation of that social world (Macionis and Plummer).

The Walks provided the public the opportunity to explore the landscape as a group that then shared its discoveries in conversation along the way. This collective experience built a sense of community within the group as they learned from me, and we learned from each other. Walking artist and researcher Richard Keating describes this as collaborative participatory action research in which "the artist and people in the community [are] co-researchers; the research being



Fig.30 Group walk, sports fields



Fig.31 Recording discussion south of the Hearn

carried-out on behalf of and with the community as action research” (18).

My method of advocating for the Port Lands was to build community through attentive immersion in the landscape, an abbreviated version of my own walking practice. To test the efficacy of this approach, I observed participant behaviour and recorded conversations with the participants as we walked, and requested they fill out a questionnaire at the end. I asked participants to describe the sensations they felt, their opinions of the landscape, and to describe their vision for future of this district.

Some participants preferred to take time to process the experience rather than responding immediately. To facilitate this I collected responses by email, using the form on the Walk’s website portlandswalk.com. The questions are listed in Appendix A: Participant Questionnaire. The results are described in Results and Findings section.

Details about the process of developing the Walk are described in the Research and Creation section that appears below the Literature Review.



Fig.32 Group walk, Cherry Street bridge

LITERATURE REVIEW

The artist led public Walks were intended to attract a group of people who would explore the landscape together. This group activity prompts discussion about the shared experience. Creative learning consultant Peter Renshaw describes the role of the artist in creating experiences that inspire conversation within a community:

Conversation, then, becomes the bedrock of any cultural engagement in which the artist's voice resonates with the myriad of individual voices within the wider community. It is imperative that artists, creators, innovators, teachers and artistic leaders have the skills, confidence, imagination and vision to create live, shared experiences which have something to say and make sense to audiences in different contexts (83).

In this section I introduce the literature I built upon to develop a walk that creates conditions for starting this conversation. I start my investigation by considering the importance of sensation, affect, movement, attentiveness and memory in place making. I next introduce the discourse of landscape urbanism, and human and cultural geography. This literature confirmed the importance of embodied experience in practicing landscape and taught me to look at the Port Lands as an interconnected whole. I finish the review by discussing artists whose walking practices focus on place making through attentiveness to the senses, or use their walking practice to speak for a landscape.

Walking, Sensation, Memory And Place Making

I developed the Walk to investigate how sensation and experience form attachment to place. Walking is known to connect the walker to place through multisensory experience. Michel de Certeau explains the process: "The act of

walking ... is a process of *appropriation* of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian [...]; it is a spatial acting-out of the place” (97-98, emphasis in the original).

The importance of multisensory perception in place making has until recently been underestimated. Anthropologist Steven Feld reveals in his essay *Places Sensed, Senses Placed*, that discourse relating to place typically ignored senses other than the visual:

The overwhelmingly multisensory character of perceptual experience should lead to some expectation for a multisensory conceptualization of place. But, by and large, ethnographic and cultural geographic work on senses of place has been dominated by the visualism deeply rooted in the European concept of landscape (182).

Karen Barad, theoretical physicist and feminist theorist, agrees that the visual sense does not act alone. She references sight to describe her agential realist position that everything intra-acts; nothing stands apart, or is uninfluenced by other things: “Clearly, we do not see merely with our eyes. Interacting with (or



Fig.33 Group discussion

rather, intra-acting ‘with’ and as part of) the world is part and parcel of seeing” (157). Thus intra-action can be understood as multi-sensual. Philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre links practice to time and the body. The practitioner “calls on all his senses. [...] He thinks with his body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality” (21).

The Walk focuses on tuning into each sense individually, but not because they are internalized separately. Brian Massumi describes how the senses are interwoven with each other: “Vision always cofunctions with other senses, from which it receives a continuous feed and itself feeds into: hearing, touch, proprioception, to name only the most prominent” (145). I asked Walk participants to consider the senses individually in order to reinforce in them a state of presentness, which is addressed in more detail below.

The practice of walking is experiential, causing sensations to reverberate with each other within the body. In response to *Les cinqs sens*, English professor Steven Connor agrees with Michel Serres, that, “each sense is in fact a nodal cluster, a clump, [...] a mingling of the modalities of mingling” (323).



Fig.34 Demonstrating sensory immersion

Massumi ties this notion to experience, stating that sensation is a self-referential “resonation, or interference pattern [that] can be seen as converting distance, or extension, into intensity. ... The intensity is experience” (15).

Sensations experienced by the body are informed by memories of those previously perceived, in addition to intermingling with them. Susan Stewart describes the process, “We may apprehend the world by means of our senses, but the senses themselves are shaped and modified by experience and the body bears a somatic memory of its encounters with what is outside of it” (61).

Steven Feld describes the relationship between perception, memory and the senses, by referring to Henri Bergson:

Sensation, sensual presence, is still more, more than embodiment, more than perceptual figure-grounds, more than the potential for synesthesia. It was Henri Bergson’s insight, long ago, in *Matter and Memory*, that ‘there is no perception which is not full of memories. With the immediate and present data of our senses, we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience’ (181).

Walk participants experience new sensations that intermingle with memories of other landscapes. Through this process, the new perceptions can create in them an attachment to the landscape they are exploring for the first time, or in a new way. Anthropologist Barbara Bender describes how past and present work together in place making, “People relate to place and time through memory, but the memories may be of other places and other times” (2002: S107).

I begin the Walks by describing to the participants how I practice sensory exploration, highlighting presentness and attentiveness. The participants are then sent forth to practice their perceptive skills. According to writer Eleanor Margolies perception is like taking a precision ‘reading’: it takes practice. She notes that



Fig.35 Testing out the sports fields artificial turf

perception “draws on the experience of the reader and changes the reader. To pay attention transforms the environment” (111).

The Walk invites the public into the landscape, to experience it through emplacement. David Howes defines emplacement in *Empire of the Senses*, “While the paradigm of ‘embodiment’ implies an integration of mind and body, the emergent paradigm of emplacement suggests the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment” (7). He insists that “the sensory order, in fact, is not just something one sees or hears about; it is something one *lives*” (3, emphasis in the original).

Participants may already be familiar with parts of the Port Lands, but the Walk offers them a new way to observe it: slowly and with intention. Cultural geographer Tim Edensor describes how this is an act of emplacement: “This differently performing body, acting contingently in these unfamiliar surroundings, is not merely reactive to the effusion of sensory affordances but also actively engages with the things it beholds” (2005: 326).

The Walk affects attachment to landscape by encouraging presentness and attentiveness. Suzanne Guerlac, literature and cultural critic, describes that presentness “is to be here now [...] to engage completely with the feelings of the present moment in all their contingency” (91). Attention “renders perception more intense and brings out its details” (133).

The practice of walking leads to emplacement, and knowledge of a place. Feld links emplacement with movement, “Because motion can draw upon the kinesthetic interplay of tactile, sonic, and visual senses, emplacement always implicates the intertwined nature of sensual bodily presence and perceptual engagement” (181). Anthropologist Tom Ingold ties walking to information processing: “cognition should not be set off from locomotion, along the lines of a division between head and heels, since walking is itself a form of circumambulatory knowing” (331).

Movement and attentiveness sensitize walking practitioners to their own interactions with and observations of the landscape. Through these actions and their embodied positionality they form their own opinions of and take a position on its future. It is important to attend to all elements of the landscape, including considering one’s self, the human, as part of the network. The Walk connects participants to the landscape through a multisensory practice that creates a subjective attachment to it.

Landscape Urbanism, and Human and Cultural Geography

Walking practices draw inspiration from a wide range of landscape studies. My walking practice is informed by landscape urbanism, a hybrid discipline of landscape architecture, urban planning and ecology, and human

and cultural geography. These disciplines probe human intervention in and interactions with the landscape, reflecting contemporary attitudes toward the environment that promote the position that humans are a part of the environment rather than above and in control of it.

The Walk's vantage points are located at Port Lands ecotones. Ecotones are zones of contact between ecosystems, where "the number of species is greatest" (Wilson: 96). By 'species' I include the forces of nature, industry and recreation that interact along those boundaries. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands, Canada Research Chair in Sustainability and Culture, reinforces this position: "As soon as one is willing to think of human-non-human interaction as an ecotone, a zone of contrast, change, and co-construction, a door is opened to a fantastic range of cross-species, cross-disciplinary, and cross-cultural conversations" (48).

The Port Lands' agents of nature, industry, and recreation continually interact. Barad describes agency as relational and entangled, making it difficult to separate nature from culture, for example, noting that they are not oppositional.

"Crucially, agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has. [...]

Agency is 'doing' or 'being' in its intra-activity" (178, emphasis in the original).

Landscape architect and theorist James Corner explains how this intra-activity plays out in a landscape, "Individual agents [act] across a broad field of operation [producing] incremental and cumulative

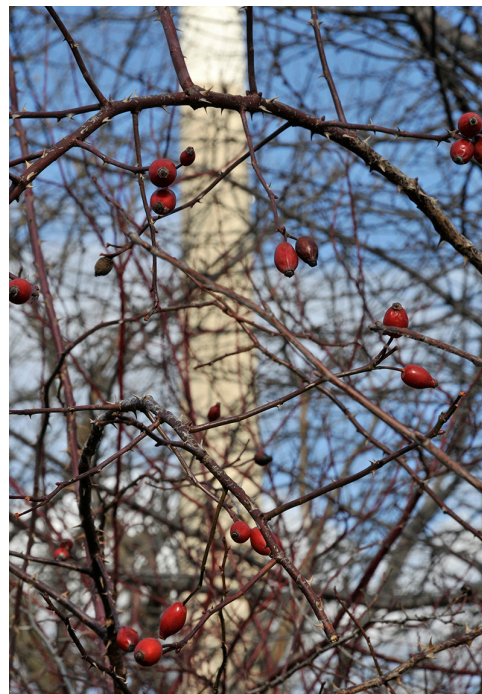


Fig.36 Entangled in roses

effects that continually evolve the shape of an environment over time” (2006: 29).

The Walk’s vantage points reveal the interrelationships between nature, industry and recreation. The decision to ensure that all three agents are featured at each vantage point was informed in part by the hybrid discipline of landscape urbanism. Corner explains that landscape urbanism recognizes a landscape’s agents as interwoven, and equally important: “everything is connected to everything else, and if the ‘environment’ is something always ‘outside’, then we fail to realize the full codependency and interactivity of things” (2003: 62).

At the vantage points, participants observe how the agents’ relationships change during the time spent exploring the location. These changes include the shifting odours, sounds and sights produced by flora and fauna, people and vehicles that move through this landscape. They reveal its rhythms. In *Rhythmanalysis*, Lefebvre says that rhythm is linked to time and place: “Everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is *rhythm*” (15, emphasis in the original).

Rhythm is dynamic, changing over time. Our own bodily rhythms interact with those found in the landscape we engage with. Edensor refers to Lefebvre in his discussion of the temporal nature of rhythms and the dynamics of place. He suggests that

we can identify the distinctive characteristics of place [... by] the particular ways in which changing rhythmic processes interweave to afford places a mixity of temporal events of varying regularity [...] This perspective avoids the conception of place as static, for rhythms are essentially dynamic, part of the multiplicity of flows that emanate from, pass through and centre upon place and contribute to its situate dynamics (2010: 3).

The attentive multisensory Walk engages participants in a new way of practicing landscape as they become part of its rhythmic flow. Bender notes that

“landscapes are created out of people’s understanding and engagement with the world around them. They are always in process of being shaped and reshaped” (2002: S103).

Here we return to the problematic dominance of the visual in landscape studies, as introduced in the section above. Human geographer Gunhild Setten is concerned with the emphasis on the visual and the avoidance of practice in geography. Setten believes that visual emphasis complicates contemporary definitions of landscape and place: “Undoubtedly, landscape discourses rest to a large degree on how sight and seeing is conceptualized. Usually, ‘seeing’ is considered as passive observation, as a means of controlling a view” (43). She prefers to emphasize landscape as ‘practiced’, noting that “embodied practices until recently have been seen as relatively irrelevant to most Anglophone landscape research” (41). Setten refers to Bender to emphasize her point: “People’s unfixable everyday practices have thus been reserved for those concerned with understanding and theorizing place. Consequently, a ‘landscape way of seeing’ literally creates a sense of things being in *place*” (41, emphasis in the original).



Fig.37 Attending to the sensations



Fig.38 Cruising trails

De Certeau says that place “implies an indication of stability” (117). Place is not static. Some of its elements are fluid, even transient, like smells and sounds. We return to Lefebvre, who describes the changing rhythms of a place over time, “smells are a part of rhythms, reveal them: odours of the morning and evening, of hours of sunlight or darkness, of rain or fine weather” (21).

This fluidity means that walking practitioners rediscover place with each return visit. Bender describes the rediscovery process, “Walking along seasonal pathways, a person part-knows the way, part-knows that each time of return there will be change and unfamiliarity; part-fears, part-revels in the chance encounter, the possible adventure” (2001: 84).

Walking practitioners travel through a landscape on a path of discovery, rather than travelling through it to reach a destination in a less conscious state. Attentiveness increases awareness of the changes that occur from one visit to another. The changes reveal the interconnectedness of the landscape’s forces, and the walker becomes connected to the landscape.

Human and cultural geographers are interested in adopting the artist’s embodied practices in their own disciplines. Hawkins describes geography’s and her own interest in art practice in this way:

[Art] has only recently begun to receive attention within geography’s concern with multi-sensuous bodies in-action. Beginning from

research that locates artistic practices in building geography's account of the senses, I [...] examine how studies of art require us to engage with the 'body' as something through which research is done. This leads in turn [...] to the need to 'expand' research and writing techniques to engage appropriately with the material generated by the use of the body as a research tool (61).

Walking artists embody the landscape, as revealed in the following section.

Art Walking Case Studies

Art walking is a way of practicing landscape through emplacement. I discovered this for myself during my immersion in the Port Lands. I began this thesis project with the intention of creating a gallery installation, but my practice evolved over the course of my embodied investigation of the Port Lands and the direction changed. It became evident that my usual landscape wanderings were taking on a new importance: I was going to use the project to advocate for this place. I would invite people to the Port Lands to experience it for themselves along with me in an effort to foster an appreciation for its strange beauty. To that end it was useful to investigate artists whose walking practices focus on the senses to develop connection to place, and those whose public walks have an advocacy role. I also link their practices to the literature discussed above.

My investigation began with renowned walking artist Hamish Fulton who established his practice in the late 1960s. The fundamental lessons were that he views his walking practice as idea-based, and that he considers his group walks as artwork, rather than creating a tangible object or installation from the experience. Fulton is known for his endurance walks; he often walks alone. His recent works have become more political, and are more likely to involve the

public. Fulton discussed his practice with Alastair Sooke of *The Telegraph*: “I like to introduce the notion of ideas into walking, expanding the idea of walking, instead of walking simply as a recreational pursuit” (Sooke: 2012).

Fulton’s recent work *Slowalk* is a participatory meditative piece that involves a large group public participants. His walks generally take place outdoors, but one iteration of *Slowalk* occurred inside the Tate Modern. It was performed in support of Ai WeiWei and freedom of expression. Curator Kathy Noble explained that the piece involved the public in a “collective journey [...] in which the audience is also the artwork”. In two hours it is over and “nothing exists apart from the memory of that [walk]” (TateShots, 2011). I will add that the participants come away with a memory of the purpose of the walk, which was to contemplate freedom of expression and to bring attention to Ai WeiWei’s detention by the Chinese government.

Viewing art is experiential. The public art walk is an experience created by the act of engaging with the landscape. Design historian Victor Margolin explains that art fuels imagination by engaging the public: “Imagination is an artist’s greatest asset. [...] People can be moved and aroused by powerful environments, innovative designs, and practical demonstrations of active engagement” (28).

Art walking projects often ask participants to attend to a specific sense they experience en route. Sound artist Lawrence English created the listening walk *Site-Listening: Brisbane*. English directs participants by GPS coordinates to locations at which they are instructed to attend to the local soundscape. “These locations act as a sound map of sorts, plotting out sound curiosities across Brisbane’s varied terrain” (Room40). In the walk’s accompanying booklet English suggests salient sounds to listen for. The purpose of his site listening project is

to encourage us to ponder “our relationships to the sounds we find ourselves in daily contact with” (Room40). His walks connect the listener to experiences they may not have had on their own.

Harriet Hawkins addresses sound walks in her discussion of David Pinder’s essay *Ghostly footsteps*: “His analysis of aural art walks [describes] how the works ‘make you acutely aware of rhythm, pace, breath: of the practice of walking’ [...] ‘the melding between the art work and consciousness of the participant means that the walk is a highly specific experience’ enfolding multiple times, spaces and rhythms” (62).

Sissel Tolaas uses her multi-disciplinary art practice to investigate place making by asking participants to tune into the smell sense. Curator Jim Drobnick describes all that her practice entails: “Her olfactory portraits of Paris, Mexico City and Berlin are distilled from long-term and labor-intensive periods of consultations, sensory walks, data collection, mapping, interviews, and community involvement” (266). I am most interested in the affect of her smell walks on the participants and the importance of community involvement. Tolaas’s sensory experiments “revealed a wide range of affective meanings and emotional attachments to the smells. [...] Instead of merely serving as a side effect, smells intrinsically factored into the tacit knowledge and habitus of Parisian living” (Drobnick: 268). I find Tolaas’s projects to be exemplary of the importance of the senses in forming opinions of and attachments to place. I agree with Drobnick that “smelling involves more than passive reception; it



Fig.39 Group discussion

also engages assessment, thought, and agency” (272).

A walking practice stimulates the senses, as Sarah Pink, et al. remind us in their introduction to *Walking Across Disciplines*: “As an embodied, and emplaced, activity, walking must always be understood as multisensory [...]. A consideration of walking in arts practice and in (visual) ethnography brings to the fore the interrelatedness of the visual and the other senses” (4-5).

Public art walks are events that can stimulate public discussion about, and lead to influencing civic planning issues. Pink, et al. describe the importance of such events: “academic work should engage with public issues, [...] it might be presented as public scholarship that has social and cultural impact, and it is here that arts practice offers new routes to communicating beyond conventional boundaries” (4).

Richard Keating engages the public in walks as he seeks to discover “some of the ways that people value place and how these various ways of appreciating places can be expressed and read together as a community vision” (Keating website). Keating’s walk participants draw, make rubbings or use his homemade ‘drawing machine’ during their outings. These methods create connections between the public and the landscape they investigate. He says that “the purpose of the research is to further democratize the decision-making processes around landscape change in ways that combine top down, scientific expertise and objective aesthetic appreciation of places with locally experienced, subjective aesthetic appreciation of place” (18).

Artists, geographers and landscape urbanists believe that one best learns a landscape through attentive embodied practices. Each looks at landscape through a different lens, but is interested in how the other disciplines can lead to further discoveries within their own.



Fig.40 Group walk, sports fields

I began this project with embodied exploration of the Port Lands. It developed into the Walk as I built upon the common connections I found in the three disciplines addressed in this section. The Walk became an advocacy project that creates attachment to place by introducing the public to the landscape's diversity and leading them to discover the interconnectedness of its forces that reveal it as a dynamic whole. These actions can create a sense of community that might influence the direction of the reconstruction of the Port Lands.

RESEARCH AND CREATION

My project's studio investigations began in territory that I am most familiar with: photography and sculpture. I considered creating site-specific sculptural works made from materials found on location, and sought out sites and materials on my first forays to the Port Lands. My intention was to create a work that would compel people to experience the feral landscape in person.

Incorporating the research detailed above into the knowledge gained through my immersive landscape exploration led to a series of material and methodological investigations. How would I compel the public to explore the landscape in the way that I do? I had become invested in the Port Lands, and I wanted to advocate for its continued industrial, recreational and natural feral character. My investigations led to the realization that I would have to lead by example.

Creating conditions necessary to summon the public to experience the sensations inherent to this landscape led to the development of the Port Lands Sensory Walk. The Walk would invite people into the landscape to experience, or practice it, for themselves. For those already familiar with the Port Lands, I intended to re-introduce them to it by facilitating a new method of exploring it.

I would achieve these goals by leading participants on an attentive Walk, focusing on the 'now' in a deliberate attempt to affect them. Wunderlich describes how walking triggers an emotional attachment to place: "While walking in urban space the sensorial engagement with the environment involves the intensification of sentiments, imagery and metaphors that we associate with places. It is simply by walking through places that we grow our attachment to them" (130).

The Port Lands Sensory Walk

The Walk begins at the Cherry Street Strauss bascule trunnion and Warren truss bridge, proceeds south to Cherry Beach, east then northward to the Cherry Beach Sports Fields, then east through naturalized areas and ends on Leslie Street just north of Unwin Avenue. It includes a variety of observational opportunities that alternate between busy streetscapes and hidden clearings in



Fig.41 Cherry St bascule bridge with Warren truss

the midst of dogwoods and wildflowers. The Walk offers participants a variety of observational opportunities that are punctuated by the five vantage points. Each of these vantage points offers a unique mix of recreational, industrial and natural elements. Here the participants can observe the diversity that the Port Lands district offers. The following description elaborates on the walk as experienced during the month of September 2013.

The Walk begins at the Cherry St. bascule and truss bridge. Before the group explores this vantage point, I relate the story of how I developed my own attachment to the troubled Port Lands landscape. I describe my walking practice as that of attentive exploration, emphasizing the importance of being alert to sounds, sights, smells, tastes and touch sensations. I encourage the participants to engage with the landscape, directing them to move about slowly and tune into the individual sensations they experience.

This attentive state of exploration enhances the sensual experience beyond that of the typical, non-focused state. The practice of attentive walking ideally forms in the participant an embodied knowledge of the landscape's character. Cultural geographers David Crouch and Charlotta Malm explain how

we interpret that character: “It is possible to argue that landscapes become a process of reflexivity, of identity and inter-subjectivity. Their ‘character’ is constructed, by the subject herself, from numerous ‘things’, and her own encounter, physically, with bits of landscape” (255). This statement echoes Massumi’s position that sensation is self-referential, as noted in the literature review above.

All three Port Lands agents, industry, recreation and nature, can be observed at the Walk’s five vantage points. Each site offers a different assortment of these elements. I selected the Martin Goodman Trail as the main path, skirting the sidewalk-less roads in an effort to make the Walk accessible to a broad range of participants. It provides a safe path that eliminates the need to cut across busy roads.

The Walk route is mapped on two information signs installed in busy parking areas to attract the attention of passersby. The five Walk vantage points are each marked by a flag. These wayfinding mechanisms are reminiscent of



Fig.42 Cherry Beach sign

information signs found at national parks, or plaques mounted at scenic lookouts.

Alexander Wilson, landscape designer and community activist, explains that park signage and brochures function as publicity materials that “anticipate, explain, recall, and surround [...] geographies” (16). The Walk’s signs do feature a typical directional map, but differ from the usual fare by describing the project instead of describing the landscape. Similarly, the flags mark the vantage points where participants are to interpret the surroundings for themselves, rather than



Fig.43 Vantage Point 1

interpreting the landscape for the viewer.

The first vantage point is located at the southeast corner of the lower bascule, or lift-bridge, on Cherry Street. It reveals the district’s close proximity to downtown. Visual observations include the bridge, the shipping channel, Porter planes, ships and boats, roads, salt pyramids topped with seagulls, a car lot, hydro generating stations, dense trees, privately owned recreational facilities, the Toronto Islands, and Toronto Harbour.

Sounds are generated by traffic, propeller planes, go karts, bicycles and rollerblades, cottonwood leaves, and passing conversations. Typical smell sensations include marine and traffic odours, grass and garbage. Somatosensory, or touch sensations, are created by weather conditions, and can be experienced by feeling pavement, concrete, chain link fence, the flaking metal of the bridge, grass and leaves.



Fig.44 Vantage Point 2

To reach the second vantage point participants walk south toward Cherry Beach east along the Trail, then north to the end of the artificial turf sports fields and the playground. The flat view is bookended by the broad sides of salt stores and a berm hiding the fields from the naturalized area to the south. Other sights include landscaped native plants and trees, planes, a parking lot, soccer fields and players, the playground, Pan Am Games construction, and a portable toilet. The latter overwhelms the smell sense. Odours emanate from traffic, trees and grass, and wood chips. Cheering and shouts punctuate the dominating traffic and plane sounds. We feel leaves, rough bark, pavement, concrete, playground equipment and the rubberized ground below, benches, metal fences and bicycle rings, and compare real and artificial turf, both underfoot and in hand.

The Walk proceeds to Regatta Road, south to the Trail, and then eastbound through a naturalized area. It passes small sailing clubs and dense flora interspersed with young planted native trees marked by paper streamers. To find the third vantage point, participants watch for the dominating Hearn Generating Station. The Trail curves close to the road, offering a close up view of the towering stack, and the third marker.

Here the Walk makes a sharp right turn off the Trail to the clearing where the original marker was situated. It was stolen within the first two weeks, likely by the people who party there at night. I positioned the replacement closer to the



Fig.45 Vantage Point 3

Trail where it is less remote and not as likely to be damaged.

This location is the most 'natural' of the five, offering views of the lake, a large marina, the Hearn, airplanes, dragonflies, fruit trees, maples and red dogwood, ground wasps guarding their larvae, random chairs and refuse left by people homesteading in the surrounding bushes. Smells come from wildflowers, natural gas, dirt, crushed grass, the lake, the marina, wood, old campfires and the sewage treatment plant. The soundscape is a blend of traffic, airplanes, lapping water, birds, insects, rustling leaves, bicycles, distant conversation, and construction. Somatosensory input is stimulated by feeling wild plants, dirt, stones, coal grains, grass, weather, wood chips, trash, water, concrete, mussels, and algae for those who ventured down the steep drop to the water's edge. Possible taste sensations include wild rosehips and apples.

The fourth vantage point is located a short distance to the east, reached by walking a trail under sumac trees and past cement blocks before rejoining the

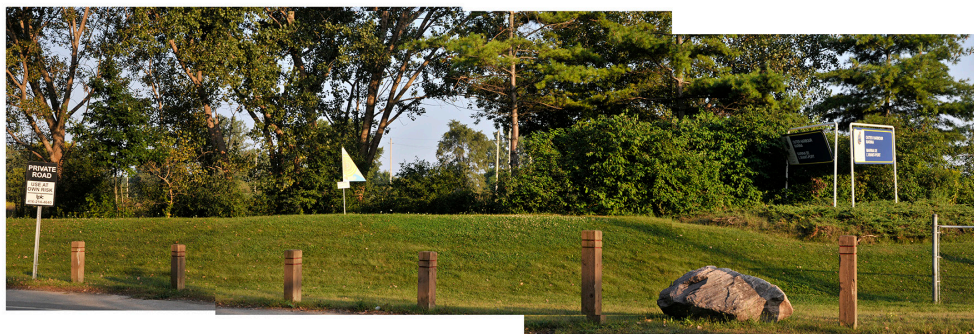


Fig.46 Vantage Point 4

Trail and crossing over the Portlands Energy Centre's (PEC) outlet channel. The marker is located on top of the knoll, offering a higher vantage point of the PEC building and stacks, the Hearn, planes, the dragonboat club, anti-beaver fences, unkempt green space, fishing fanatics, cyclists, a sharp turn in the road, chain link fence with cutout animal holes, and an expanse of grassland, wildflowers, bushes and trees. The sights of waiting vehicles and a solar powered traffic light no longer prevail since the Cherry Street bridge was reopened in mid-September after being closed for repair in November 2012. Sounds include airplanes, traffic, braking, gear changing, cyclists, wind, crickets and wasps, birds, and conversations. Touch senses are stimulated by weather, groomed grass, the ground underfoot, and leaves and branches. Exhaust intermittently dominates



Fig.47 Vantage Point 5

the smellscape, masking the fragrance of grass, flowers and leaves.

The fifth marker is located on Leslie Street north of Unwin Avenue. It is reached by continuing east along the Trail past Leanne Freeman's memorial. Freeman's body was dumped on this road in 2011, a testament to the seamier side of the Port Lands that appear desolate at night, when offroad activities prevail. Following the trail around the bend past fields and a mound of reclaimed concrete, and past the gates to Tommy Thompson Park, the walk turns north and terminates under the large tree beside the allotment gardens.

The view to the north is dominated by TTC roadwork and streetcar barns construction; thick dust obscures the view. Satellite dishes, planes, gravel trucks, sprinklers watering roads and sand piles, a new silo with portable toilets perched on top, well-tended allotments gardens backed by a berm, a curve of trembling poplars, weekday dump trucks and weekend recreational users. The soundscape is dominated by traffic and construction, interrupted by airplanes, the voices of gardeners, cyclists and pedestrians, insects, birds, slamming car doors, and sprinklers. Touch sensations include grass, fruit bushes and vines trailing from the gardens, pavement, concrete, gravel dust, and fence metal. Smells come from rank sewage, grass and garden flowers, and char broil. This vantage point stimulates taste sensations with thick dust and hot dogs.

Public Interfaces

There are two public interfaces I designed, installed and implemented to promote the Walk: onsite signage which is discussed first, and the website described thereafter.

I wanted the Walk to be a sanctioned event, so I approached the ward 30 councillor Paula Fletcher, to seek her assistance in getting this project off the ground, and also, literally, in the ground. She and her staff were supportive and arranged a meeting with the transportation department's art coordinator, but my selected locations were not in her territory. Civic machinery moves slowly, so I pressed on, contacting the parks department directly to solicit their approval to install signs and flags on park property. Stuart Slessor, supervisor for the eastern waterfront, was hard to reach in the busy spring season, but persistence awarded me with approval in late July. Having the councillor's support helped to smooth



Fig.48 Information Sign



Fig.49 Marker

the way. Slessor and his boss James Dann were aware that Fletcher's executive assistant Susan Serran was cc'd on all the correspondence.

To make the Walk project visible in the Port Lands, I installed two wayfinding signs adjacent to the Cherry Beach and Tommy Thompson Park parking areas. Their design is simple and colourful, with eye-catching graphics whose colours were sampled directly from my Port Lands photographs.

The signs introduce the Walk project, and feature a scale map outlining the route and its diversions from the Martin Goodman Trail. The embedded photographs feature views seen from the vantage points and sign locations.

I installed a flag at each vantage point. The colourful graphic features elements representing the three Port Lands agents: a stack for industry, a bicycle wheel for recreation, and a wave for nature. The fourth element is a series of concentric rings that represents sensory reverberations.

I selected the sign and flag materials for their aesthetic quality, visibility, and durability. The materials are recyclable or reusable, with the exception of the

signs' printed vinyl. There are few eco-friendly outdoor printing material options, and those available were out of reach of my limited budget.

The three-foot by five-foot information signs were printed on outdoor vinyl, and adhered to thin aluminum panels. They are mounted on two four-inch square posts inset in the ground on three-foot spikes. I arranged utility locates before installation, to avoid puncturing gas, hydro and phone lines.

The flags were commercially printed on styrene. They are relatively inexpensive to replace in case of vandalism or theft. They are mounted on six-foot aluminum flagpoles staked into the ground on eighteen-inch long spikes. Attached to each pole is the small information/map panel mentioned above.

I disguised the temporary nature of the flags by placing a heavy brake drum, or a tapered steel cylinder around each base. These objects signify the Port Lands industrial presence, the brake drums symbolizing industrial traffic, the cylinders reminiscent of the dominating Port Lands stacks. Despite my efforts, I had to replace the flag across from the Hearn stack, because the original was stolen.

The website portlandswalk.com (see Appendix C: The Website), serves multiple purposes: it promotes the Walk; announces artist led Walk dates; introduces the forces of industry, nature and recreation and briefly describes their interconnections; features a how to guide and a Walk map; outlines the interview questions; and provides an email feedback form.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The methods used to investigate the landscape, develop the Port Lands Sensory Walk, and then lead it revealed the efficacy of my walking art practice as a tool for advocating for the contradictory Port Lands landscape.

What is the efficacy of the embodied walking art practice? The efficacy of embodied walking art practice is the emplaced knowledge of the landscape produced in the artist by becoming a part of it over several seasons, and interconnecting with its temporal rhythms. The walking practice moves beyond focusing on the visual as emphasized in the literature above, and incorporates all the senses.

Another aspect of this walking art practice is that other disciplines can look at the success of employing embodied, multisensory exploration of a landscape and adopt it in their own practices.

What relationships might be produced as a result of a public art walk? The role of the artist in the public walk is to guide the participants from diverse backgrounds on a path of embodied discovery that reflects her own experiential explorations of the landscape. Providing background and context adds depth to the embodied walking experience, and contributes to forming participants' opinions of and attachment to the place. The artist leads the group along a selected route to vantage points that reveal the diversity and interconnectedness of the landscape's dynamic forces. The public walks with the artist and shares



Fig.50 Background and context

her methods of immersive engagement. A sense of community develops as the participants become co-researchers, discussing their discoveries and sharing their knowledge of the landscape.

How might an interdisciplinary walking art practice be used as advocacy?

The walking artist has gained deep knowledge of the landscape through embodied experience informed by landscape disciplines including art, human and cultural geography, and landscape urbanism. The attachments formed through this emplacement become stronger, and the artist is compelled to advocate for protecting the dynamic character that is shaped by the landscape's interconnected industrial, recreational and natural forces. The scope of the advocacy role grows as the artist takes the practice into the public realm, in the form of public walks, and by reaching out to civic and industry leaders invested in the landscape.

The Port Lands Sensory Walk successfully produced or enhanced participants' attachment to the Port Lands. Forty-eight participants attended the four walks I led in September. Thirty-four participants responded to the questionnaire.

Seven respondents were first time visitors. They indicated a desire to return again, to visit Cherry Beach and wander the naturalized areas; two will join the windsurfing club.

Fourteen of those familiar with the Port Lands declared they had made new sensual experiences while exploring the landscape. The Walk introduced them to new sites like the sports fields, outside the areas they typically target,. Everyone enjoyed the spongy feel of the playground, though there were mixed feelings about the artificial turf.

The responding participants were keen to relate their new appreciation

for the Port Lands. The following list summarizes the common opinions they expressed:

- the Walk made them consider the Port Lands as a whole
- the district should remain mixed use
- surprised by the diversity of recreational opportunities
- industry can stay: heartened to learn that recent arrivals focus on remediation and address environmental concerns
- appreciated nature's vast presence, more than expected
- expand on the naturalized areas
- maintain the sense of remoteness

Participants identified changes they would like to see:

- more access to the water along the bush-choked shoreline
- improved TTC access

The most telling indications of the Walk's effectiveness were the following statements: an anonymous participant said, "I feel inspired to work with the community after being on the walk, to keep improving the environment for future generations of people and wildlife in the city;" and David Futerman wrote, "I think ongoing guided walks in this area throughout the revitalization process and beyond would be of considerable benefit. They would serve to educate and enhance the experience of Toronto residents and visitors."

I intend to share the aggregated questionnaire results with Councillor Fletcher and Waterfront Toronto's Brenda Webster.

I will continue leading walks in the future, on my own and in collaboration with Brenda Webster who leads a Jane's Walk through the section of the Port Lands that will be redeveloped first.

CONCLUSIONS

I have become a repository for historical background and current issues facing the Port Lands. I intend to keep focused attention on the district by inviting the public to participate in the attentive walking experience of The Port Lands Sensory Walk. The power of sharing a walking practice with the public can create new relationships in the participants to the landscape, as has been proven with this interdisciplinary project.

I intend to continue disseminating the knowledge I have gained by leading walks that introduce the Port Lands to a broader public, and reaching out to industry leaders. Through these actions I am advocating for community members to shape it into a functional, inclusive and increasingly healthy ecosystem by improving on the relationships between the co-existing recreational, natural and industrial forces.

I intend to promote and engage greater public participation and community awareness through the website and promotional materials that will be disseminated through social media. I will also align the Walk with established public events as a way of increasing its public profile. I will lead a version of the Walk during the Toronto's Jane's Walk event in May 2014. Jane's Walks introduce the public to how cities work; the Port Lands is an exemplary district as it is home to important city services and industries.

The PEC has invited the Walk to participate in its Doors Open event, an opportunity to connect with hundreds of people who visit that day. I am also attending PEC sustainability committee meetings and becoming involved in their community outreach efforts to encourage the development of ecosystem nodes at industrial properties along Unwin Avenue and Leslie Street.



Fig.51 Salt with distant Pan Am construction

The Walk project has led me to become active in community groups, another way to promote the Port Lands to other civic-minded people. I joined Citizens for a Healthy Toronto Waterfront, a new group concerned with health and environmental impacts related to Billy Bishop Airport's current practices and future plans. I am also becoming active in wildlife rescue and rehabilitation and intend to volunteer at the Toronto Wildlife Centre.

The Port Lands community includes the corporations that have political impact on its future development. In addition to my dialogue with Waterfront Toronto I will foster connections with the Toronto Port Authority, and The Port Lands Company that leases all city held Port Lands properties. I will continue to connect with Councillor Paula Fletcher.

This interdisciplinary art project began with the multisensory investigation of the landscape through mapping and documenting with photography; collecting; field note taking; archival research; interviewing key players and

leading the public on experiential walks. My walking art practice is becoming increasingly political, successfully building on notions of interconnectedness and emplacement. This Walk demonstrates how a public with a walking practice can use methods of multisensory investigation to advocate for a dynamic feral landscape.

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APPENDIX A: Participant Questionnaire

THE PORT LANDS SENSORY WALK Questionnaire/Interview Guide

Although I prefer you fill this out now because I need your feedback ASAP you can email your responses to info@portlandswalk.com
You can also email me for a digital version of the questionnaire.

Outline and questions created and compiled by Lisa Binnie, MFA candidate and researcher. OCADU REB approval 2013-31.

The respondent participated in a Walk that followed along the Martin Goodman Trail in the Port Lands district of Toronto. This questionnaire gathers information about the participant's experience relating to the Walk itself, his or her personal opinion of the landscape and what should happen there in the future, if the walk revealed any new aspects of the district, and if it has changed or strengthened his or her view of the area.

Participant's name: _____
(please print legibly so that researcher can match it up with consent form details)

Contact information (phone or email): _____

Are you a regular visitor to the Port Lands?

What brought you to the Port Lands today?

How did you find out about the Walk?

Did you walk, bike or rollerblade the route?

Did you visit all five sites? If not, how many did you visit?

How much time did you spend at each location?

What sights, sounds, tactile sensations and smells did you experience today?

If you are a regular visitor to this landscape, is there anything you sensed or observed today that you haven't noticed on previous visits?

Has the Walk changed the way you feel about, or your attachment to the Port Lands? If yes, please explain.

This district is slowly being revitalized: What would you like to see happen here?

Other comments:

APPENDIX B: Field Notes

nb: These selections are lifted directly from the first seven months of my field notes and do not necessarily follow standard sentence and paragraph structures.

16 July 2012

Impressions of the Port Lands: bleached, flat, bleak, unexpected lush greenery. Barren, partially remediated, fenced, blisteringly hot. I'm pretty damp and going a bit slower than normal. Odd mix of industrial land, abandoned yet groomed or just abandoned, boating mixed with hulking power plants and mysterious bays that are home to huge carp and apparently pickerel, at least according to the fireman and his wobbly wife. Then there are the dragonboats. What is the importance of my movement through the space? I guess to cover a good amount of territory as I explore and decide about the Port Lands location as my SITE.

It's bald industrial (almost post-industrial) land.

Changes have already happened [since my initial visits] right next to the Hearn - the wall is growing and now there are piles of tires, a couple of tractor trailers and a portable toilet. The crowning touch.

The world through the fence - that's what I noticed reviewing the footage - most of the details in the landscape are neatly framed by the upper and lower strands of chainlink fencing.

21 July 2012

Night Market at T&T Supermarket on Cherry. Steamy but not grossly hot. Very dusty feet next to Hearn - figured out what's happening next door where I last discovered more cement blocks and tires and a portable toilet. This week there was more stuff and signs of activity. I think it's Indy car race barriers. Oh yeah, and there were some bleachers, but the crappiest old wooden things

something my high school would have discarded decades earlier.

Dusty, hot, humid. Stopped to re-shoot the remediation/Flax Energy places, then parked near T&T before heading into the Night Market, which had rides and flashing lights, and the usually empty lot across the way was filled with parking. So were the side streets.

The Night Market was a crush of people and food stands. Overwhelmingly packed and smoky from all the charcoal grills: deep, narrow, vented at bottom. Smoke, and ... eww what's that stink? like rotten cheese on fire: smelly tofu I dunno about that - apparently it doesn't really have much flavour, so what's the point of putting up with the powerful aroma?

Jam packed, stinking, dusty. Time to go.

Night time - well tonight's ambiance is different, no doubt because of the festivities. The parking cops were having a field day!

People were cycling in the dark, obviously out for a cruise (no, not that kind of cruise - I haven't been watching out for that yet). Some areas are without lights, just bushes, trees, fences, sometimes water, especially on the south side of Unwin.

It's barren and burnt at first glance, rich in activity of all kinds upon observing the 'pace' down here.

Two cars screech to stop right at the gates of Leslie Street Spit. I'm glad I didn't arrive there a few seconds earlier, I could have been in their way...racing down Leslie, they were. Stupid kids, really stupid! Right next to the garden plots where people are doing something for themselves, and making the landscape more interesting, too.

I'm more interested in the land around the industrial spaces than the buildings themselves.

29 August 2012

Where to set up night shoot tonight? [nb: 90 minute-long exposures shot with film] Will have to see - I'd like to do three shots on Unwin but can only get one at a time. Will have to let lights tell me where.

What am I DOING down here? I'm always DOING the same thing - what do I chew on here? EVERYTHING.

I was there in the middle of the night to catch an almost full moon[lit landscape]. Helper is Steve Currie my friend who didn't mind having appetizers in the back of the truck outside the old Strada Harbour property. There was too much light from passing cars, so I shut down exposure after 40 minutes. I hope something shows up [on the film], and that it's not too dense! We moved on to Cherry Beach to have the rest of my birthday picnic. Afterward we wandered past the Cirque de Soleil tent it was still in beginning stages [of being erected] but had very bright lights so I video recorded as we moved by it. Drove along Commissioners to the rowing club where I had a great view of PEC lights. Shot some digital there, panoramic view. I also took a very long (was 20 minutes) exposure of the building that is being taken down. Unfortunately I also stood in front of the camera for a long while, so there you go. It smelled like oily marine odours and grass.

12 September 2012

Today is 27C, windy, dusty. Noisy with pounding of Hearn deep drilling project, dump and gravel trucks bouncing their way over the bad lumpy roads. There's a bulldozer working inside the site being demolished next to the ship turning channel. I hear gulls and cheeping, bulldozers and backhoes moving gravel around and the slow acceleration of large trucks as they make their

way out onto the street, and the squeaking of conveyors moving rocks and dirt around. It smells of marine smell, not horrible but not pleasant. Closer to the demolition site [Cascades paper plant on Commissioners]. it stinks of rubber but maybe someone was burning out their clutch. I'm glad I brought grapes and chocolate - they're energizing me. I also just noticed the echo from the pounding across the water - the echo bounces off the Hydro One building behind me on Commissioners. I solved the mystery of the banging hydro operation at PEC! It is the impact 'drill' - deep excavation hammer/crane thing. [It was a pile driver.] Little puffs of smoke come out near the top with every hammer like an explosive firing repeatedly.

I wish it weren't so bright right now - I'd love to be able to catch [photograph] that bulldozer working inside that building. I like the way it spits things out the door. It is very elusive.

I picked some plants today, next to Strada's western edge on Unwin. Wild mums, and willow, and a couple of others. I also picked some rosehips and wild snap dragons next to the PEC - at that little wild spot where the rowers park in the evenings and on weekends.

29 September 2012

Met John Wright, landscape architect and urban sketcher at the dock next to the Rock Prince [dry dock barge]. We chatted for a while, then we got kicked out by a security guard. Who knew this little plot was private? It's owned by TPLC [The Port Lands Company]. It was cool but lovely and sunny.

The Cavalia [travelling horse circus] tent is gone so now the silos a bit west, with their attendant piles of aggregate are visible from the water. I wandered down Villiers and back, shooting almost 400 photos to document that

strip. The tracks in the middle are being torn out, there was evidence of work having been done, as the rail spikes and bolts had been removed and left on the grass. I found and collected a couple of joining plates and a small assortment of rusty objects to bring home with me. I also picked samples of the wild plants growing in the abandoned lot at Villiers and Don Roadway. Watched a beautiful hawk soaring overhead, hunting and enjoying the sun and thermals. I'd planned to do some sketching, but my photo journey took hours, and my flu wore me out so I sauntered back to the truck with rusty hands and left for home.

13 October 2012

Drove out with Rudi. We walked Unwin from the PEC curve down to GreenSoils the back again. I am still in mapping mode, trying to cover all streets, both sides. There's more stuff going on at the Hearn: a guy with a Bobcat was zipping around the lot, a pickup or small truck was backed into the western-most garage door. As I walked past again I saw the Bobcat guy getting ready to move the construction sign that's next to the driveway. Found a dead flicker beside the road. I wonder if it was the same elusive bird I heard next to the city's conveyor last time I was here. I picked a sumac branch - red, lovely in the sun, leaves still supple to the touch. It's a bit big for the plant press, so I'll just set it underneath.

It was cold, windy, but there were still some bikers around. Not many people out walking. After the walk down Unwin we drove west to Cherry Beach to look for kite boarders. I noticed on the way that the new pile of salt at Cherry and Unwin had grown in size, and covered with a black jacket like all the others in the area. Kite boarders, yes, but only one in the water who wasn't having much success. He ended up walking back and forth instead. I guess the wind was too sporadic. Others lurked on the beach, their kites parked in the sand like wind

shelters.

Biggest thing that struck me today: the colours (and cold hands - so glad I brought gloves). Yellow interrupted by the beautiful purple mums and the bright red rosehips all over the place. No butterflies in sight today. There has not yet been frost, but it was really chilly this a.m. with a frost warning.

19 December 2012

6C. Sunny with big clouds. Swans galore. Condom bonanza in the tall grasses/bushes, remains of a campsite complete with toys and a purse. Ate at Cherry Street Restaurant. Air smelled like bread today, made me hungry.

Condom area grass way taller than me. I didn't plan to stick to the trails, I thought I'd shoot industry - some interesting things going on but I stuck with the beach area. Trails are hard to photograph to show the depth, to convey the right experience. These grasses are so tall! There were a couple of men around. I've seen so many baby wipes and condom wrappers here.

13 January 2013

Warmish, cloudy, snow is almost gone except in the grey ugly piles. Smells like mildew today - it not only is full of melt puddles, but it's also been raining. Parked first at Spit gates. Tried to shoot cyclists, walkers - blah. Then walked west on Unwin to the bridge - went around back to see if the tent was still there. No. Also watched the hawk in the field between PEC and Strada. Got out new lens and tried to catch some of the action - I missed the action! A seagull started diving at the hawk but I never got both in frame together. Wandered up Leslie a bit, followed the train tracks behind the 'park' and found a skull - perhaps fox? [it was a raccoon]. I took it with me. It's old = not gooey. Then I drove to Cascades - took some shots here, too. The building is almost gone now. Only

one pass-by by security, on Basin Street of course. It's 4:30 - gotta go. It's dingy dark and getting windier.

27 January 2013

Snow! Early - out of truck at 8:30 a.m. to shoot beautiful morning light, to shoot that beaver tree AGAIN but lower this time. Got joggers + tree + Hearn. It really stank of natural gas today - even on Eastern I could smell it already. Not so horrible at Unwin by PEC, but ... whiffy. Good bike, bunny and foot tracks in snow.

Drove to check further down Unwin, had to stop because of beauty light on salt. BUT it went away too fast! ended up kind of dull - persisted anyway.

Drove to Leslie and Strada - shot the sand piles/snow and satellite dishes. Next - Turning Basin - goose prints and teeny hawk eating something yukky on the far side, on the ice. Reminds me: on the water by the PEC outlet very little of the lake was open water. Ducks and loons jammed into the same bit of open water doing their thing. Sparkles on the grasses in the sun. Gorgeous! Cold! -9C but no wind believe it or not.

Cascades building is almost gone now - part of shell left, the rest is rubble.

18 February 2013

Steve and I froze after awhile, but when the sun came out it was really nice. Cold hands, cold feet, windy on the Cherry Beach end of the walk - that's where the sheet ice was, broken and piled on the shoreline like a bunch of 1" thick glass plates, broken and swept aside onto the beach. They're heavier than you'd think, and the rough snowy side sticks to your mittens. The harbour's mostly frozen over. Swans, mergansers, mallards there, and 100s if not 1000s

of seagulls perched on the ice, loudly complaining and mostly facing the same direction. Steve saw a rabbit in the cruising grasses, just next to the lot where the earthworks are going on right now. We walked along the back road where the small marinas are - someone was playing with a kite board-sized kite while others skated on two cleared patches of ice. One surface for hockey, the other for pleasure skating. Then there was all the open water - interesting sight so close to the skating area. We admired the dilapidated state of the clubhouses, a couple of which were open for their skating members.

It happened that today was Family Day, so, a Monday with not so many trucks. Lots of walkers heading out to the Spit considering the chill wind. Some folks with huge lenses and spotting scopes [birdwatchers].

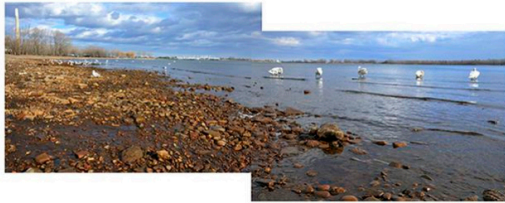
APPENDIX C: Website

ANOTHER USA PROJECT
The Port Lands Sensory Walk

HOME INDUSTRY, NATURE & RECREATION THE WALK WALK DATES THE PROJECT ARTIST STATEMENT FEEDBACK/CONTACT



The Port Lands SENSORY WALK

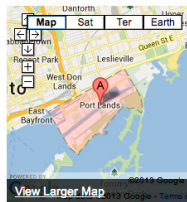


The Port Lands Sensory Walk is a public walk that leads to five selected vantage points along the Martin Goodman Trail. Participants tune into their senses and observe the dynamics between the forces of nature, industry, and recreation that share and shape this unique urban landscape.

YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUESTED

WALK WITH THE ARTIST

click [here](#) for the dates



The Port Lands district is located at the east end of Toronto's harbour, south of Lake Shore Boulevard between Cherry Street and Leslie Street.

Click on the Google map to the left for directions, or consult the TTC [website](#) for route information.

Check the menu bar at the top of the page to find out more about the Walk and the Project.

EXPERIENCE IT NOW

The Port Lands Sensory Walk © 2013

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The Port Lands SENSORY WALK



DISCOVER THE DYNAMIC FORCES AT WORK IN THE TORONTO PORT LANDS

The Port Lands district is wild and industrial, intimate and awe-inspiring.

Its dynamic character is shaped by the forces of industry, nature, and recreation that share the landscape as they engage with it.

The view from the roads, bridges and trails reveals dramatic contrasts: flat terrain and monumental pyramids, cement dusted roads and long shipping channels, circling hawks and uniformed cyclists, naturalized parkland and towering chimney stacks.

INDUSTRY WORKING ON THE SURFACE

The Port Lands hosts a range of industries, integral to the city's functionality, cement operations that supply downtown development projects, and road salt storage.

Industry also includes film studios and related businesses, music and art studios, entertainment facilities, aggregate and cement operations, municipal and private waste facilities, a natural gas-powered hydro plant, Toronto Hydro, Toronto Transit Commission, Canada Post, soil remediation operations, and a food-fuel-feed flaxseed plant.

Industry has a troubled past in the Port Lands. The once vast wetland at the mouth of the Don River was slowly converted into industrial land starting in the 1880's, filled in with sewer sludge, ash and refuse. Industries like oil storage tank farms further contaminated the land.

Standards and practices have improved; a recent amendment can be seen along the shipping channel where the salt piles have been covered to minimize salt contamination of the adjacent land and waterways.

There are other signs of improvement: the Portlands Energy Centre is establishing a Carolinian forest, and hosts a University of Toronto researcher's bee colonies, and the new TTC Bams is installing an environmentally friendly stormwater management pond and bird-friendly windows.

The district is considered brownfields, in need of remediation before development can begin. Remediation includes soil capping that allows for construction on the surface. The Pinewood Toronto Film Studios sit on such a site. Soil and groundwater monitoring is evident on vacant land where vertical tubes jut out of the ground, a sign that more development is to come.

Industry has slowly relocated outside of Toronto's centre, but still has a strong presence here. Parkland and recreational facilities are located in and around these large scale industries, creating this environment's unique dynamics.

NATURE THE RELENTLESS MARCH FORWARD

Natural forces are unstoppable. Flora and fauna push through every crack and crevice as they persistently claim the landscape. Weather and water erode the surfaces they encounter, and soil and seeds disperse far and wide. Industry and recreation have to deal with the destructive incursions, even as they use these same forces to their benefit.

The Port Lands offers public access to the waterfront, where we find evidence of its human constructed past. Cherry Beach is pebbly underfoot, sand and stones are interspersed with well-tumbled pieces of glass and brick.

Human intervention is even more obvious along the shoreline to the east, which is shored up by concrete slabs. The natural force of erosion reveals their rebar skeletons. They are slippery with algae and zebra mussels.

East of the Beach is a naturalized area with abundant goldenrod and milkweed, and tangles of fruit trees, red osier dogwoods and wild roses. Willows and maples grow along the waterfront, masking the shoreline from the road.

Resident animals include hundreds of bird species, rodents and rabbits, coyotes, deer, fish and insects. Invasive species like zebra mussels and fire ants have also arrived.

The natural elements thrive here on their own, their symbiotic relationships providing each other with nutrition and habitat.

This landscape will not be allowed to return to a wild state, it is too valuable. But there is good news even as plans for residential development have been announced: the mouth of the Don River will be amended as planners move to integrate municipal and development needs with the landscape's natural flows. It is a sign of our changing relationship with our environment.

The Don River project exemplifies the dynamic give and take between the competing interests of nature, recreation and industry as they negotiate ever-evolving relationships.

RECREATION ENGAGING WITH LAND AND WATER

Recreation makes use of what nature has to offer, and the Port Lands offers a variety of options that attract recreational users of all types. There are quiet places for solitary pursuits, and more social spaces for those who prefer to interact with others.

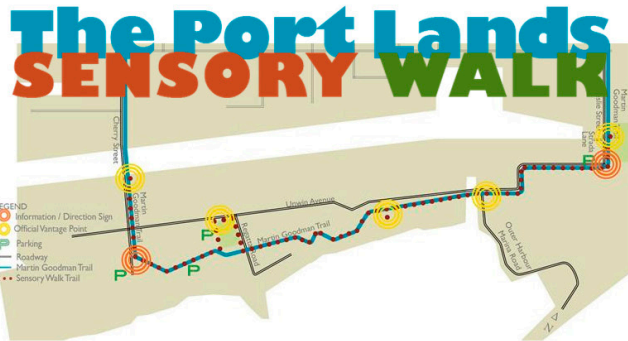
Recreation includes sports, and other types of physical engagement with land and water. Popular Port Lands activities are cycling, rollerblading, walking, swimming, beachcombing, boating, fishing, windsurfing, kiteboarding, soccer, gardening, and dog walking.

While most of the recreational pursuits blend into the landscape, a stark contrast is found at the Cherry Beach Sports Fields where the land is hidden under unnatural astroturf. This fake grass is comically peppered with rabbit droppings.

The Royal Canadian Yacht Club is situated next to working docks, and a marina is moored on the peninsula spit that forms the Outer Harbour. Small sailing and windsurfing clubs are tucked in next to the naturalized waterfront east of Cherry Beach. Their gates and fences restrict public access to a section of the southern shore, but they offer their members a community, and a way to engage with the water rather than viewing it from the shore.

The Martin Goodman Trail is a mixed-use path that winds through the district. It provides safe passage to those who prefer to travel without feeling endangered by the industrial traffic. Not everyone prefers the safer route: serious cyclists train on the roads, preferring to endure the company of mammoth trucks rather than riding cautiously along the winding Trail where they must be alert for wandering pedestrians and startled wildlife.





THE SENSORY WALK: A HOW TO GUIDE

Walking in nature can change your state of mind by allowing you to relax and be in the moment. The Port Lands Sensory Walk offers you the experience of moving through a more complicated landscape, yet offers the same benefit.

Participating in the Port Lands Sensory Walk promotes being in the moment by engaging your senses as you observe the dramatic character of this natural, industrial and recreational landscape.

The sensations you experience on the Walk build on memory, and can change how you relate to this landscape.

Experience it now !

The Walk offers participants the opportunity to observe the Port Lands' sights, sounds, smells and physical sensations at a leisurely pace.

The five selected vantage points are found along the Martin Goodman Trail, marked by sail-shaped flags that are indicated by yellow circles on the map above.

Two markers are off the trail:

- northeast corner of the soccer fields near the parking entrance and playground
- directly across from the towering Hearn Generating Station smokestack: the flag was replaced Sep 14 and is now closer to the Trail - walk through the trees to the waterfront to find the secret clearing.

The orange circles mark the locations of two large onsite information signs that feature the map. They are installed at the parking areas at Cherry Beach, and at the corner of Leslie Street and Unwin Avenue outside the gates to Tommy Thompson Park.

Pedestrians who visit all five vantage points complete the Walk in two leisurely hours.

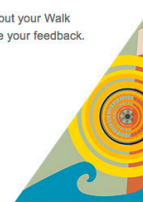
Please be sure to wear comfortable footwear, a hat, sunblock, etc. as necessary.

How to participate

Upon reaching an Official Vantage Point you are asked to be attentive to what your senses take in by focusing on one at a time.

- Close your eyes and LISTEN: how many sounds do you hear?
- BREATHE IN deeply: what do you smell? Can you identify the sources?
- Open your eyes and SEE what you're looking at: what big impressions and small details do you take in?
- Turn your attention to TOUCH sensations: what do you FEEL on your skin, under your feet, and with your hands?
- How does TASTE affect your impressions of this landscape?

I'm interested in hearing about your Walk experience. Please send me your feedback. Click [here](#) for details.



The Port Lands SENSORY WALK



ARTIST LED WALKS

DATES AND TIMES

NEW! Additional Artist Led Walk
Sunday October 27th, 11 a.m.

Monday September 2nd, 11 a.m.

Friday September 6th, 11 a.m.

Sunday September 8th, 11 a.m.

Saturday September 14th, 10 a.m.*

**with guest speaker Dave Hardy who will lead us on a special detour to the Portlands Energy Centre's grounds to learn about their sustainability efforts that include the establishment of a Carolinian forest, and much more.*

Sunday October 13th, 10 a.m.

*The Walks start at The Port Lands Sensory Walk flag at the southeast corner of the lower Cherry Street bridge (currently under construction), just north of Unwin Avenue.
Rain or shine.*

The Walk takes approximately two hours to complete. Please be sure to wear comfortable footwear, a hat, sunblock, etc. as necessary.

PREFER TO WALK ON YOUR OWN?

Walk the Port Lands at your own pace.
Official Flags and Maps will be installed onsite until October 31, 2013.

Your opinions and feedback are truly wanted! Click [here](#) for more details.



The Port Lands SENSORY WALK

ABOUT THE PORT LANDS SENSORY WALK PROJECT



THE PORT LANDS SENSORY WALK IS A MASTER'S OF FINE ARTS THESIS PROJECT

The Port Lands Sensory Walk is a public artist led walk during which participants discover the Toronto Port Lands in Toronto.

The Walk winds along streets and trails to five vantage points that feature how the dynamic forces of nature, industry, and recreation share and shape this landscape.

The goals of the Walk are to:

- provide participants a new way of exploring the landscape: being fully present and attentive to the sensations experienced while engaging with the landscape.
- instill, change or enhance participants' opinions of and attachment to the Port Lands.
- promote public awareness of the issues to consider as the district is redeveloped.

The project has been effective and I will continue to lead Port Lands Sensory Walks in the future.

Watch for new date announcements on the website, on the City of Toronto events pages, Facebook and through other media outlets.

Sign onto the Walk's email list by sending me a note through the feedback page.



YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT TO THE PROJECT

Even though the project's thesis paper has been written, I am still interested in feedback about your Walk experience. I want to know what engages you during the Walk itself.

I would also like to hear what realizations you came to, or discoveries you made in the Port Lands.

What do you think should happen to this waterfront? I am very interested in your opinions as to the future of the Port lands.

Click [here](#) for the list of questions I'm interested in hearing responses to. They appear below the email form.



RESEARCH RESULTS

After each of the first four Walks I solicited feedback from participants to be published in the project's thesis paper, and reported here on the website.

Thirty four Walk participants responded to the [questionnaire](#). The respondents were keen to relate their new appreciation for the Port Lands. They were glad to discover or rediscover the district by exploring areas previously unknown to them. Participants valued the attentive walking practice, and the supplementary contextual information I provided.

The following summary lists the participants' commonly expressed opinions:

- the Walk unified the Port Lands by creating a sense of place: they saw it as a whole rather than made up of disparate interests.
- the district should remain mixed use.
- industry can stay: heartened to learn that recent arrivals focus on environmental concerns, reuse and remediation.
- surprised by the diversity of recreational opportunities.
- appreciated nature's presence: there is more than expected.
- expand on the naturalized areas .
- maintain the sense of remoteness.
- improve TTC access.



The Port Lands SENSORY WALK

ARTIST STATEMENT



Sensory investigation defines my interdisciplinary art practice. I seek out landscapes on the brink of redevelopment and immerse myself in them over extended periods of time. Close observation reveals the inter-relationships of the forces that coexist in and shape the landscape under investigation. My works respond to these relationships in the forms of photography, sculpture and participatory projects.

My current project is The Port Lands Sensory Walk. The Walk invites the public to participate in the sensory exploration of a constructed post-industrial landscape.

Lisa Binnie 2013



The Port Lands SENSORY WALK

YOUR FEEDBACK IS VALUABLE TO THIS PROJECT TELL ME HOW THE WALK AFFECTED YOU

Please email me for a copy of the feedback question guide.

READ THIS FINE PRINT BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR COMMENTS

The Port Lands Walk is an MFA thesis project; your feedback is vital to my research. The questions are found on this page below the Message pane.

Be aware that by submitting this form you have the option to agree that I may incorporate your comments into my research that seeks to determine how affective the Port Lands Walk is for each participant.

See [The Project](#) page to learn more about this project and the data I am collecting.

Kindly indicate in your email whether or not you would like to remain anonymous in published findings. Remaining anonymous means that any information that I gather from you (via email or verbally) will not be associated with your name, and your name will not appear anywhere in print or online. Your personal information and email address will never be shared with anyone else, and will not appear in print or online.

Name: *

Email: *

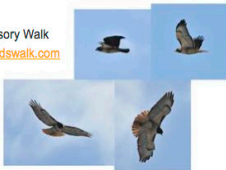
Subject: *

Message:

submit

FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

The Port Lands Sensory Walk
E-mail: info@portlandswalk.com




- Are you a regular visitor to the Port Lands?
- What brought you to the Port Lands today?
- How did you find out about the Walk?
- Did you walk, bike or rollerblade the route?
- Did you visit all five sites? If not, how many did you visit?
- How much time did you spend at each vantage point?
- What sights, sounds, tactile sensations and smells did you experience today?
- If you are a regular visitor to this landscape, is there anything you sensed today that you haven't noticed before?
- Has the Walk changed the way you feel about, or your attachment to the Port Lands? If yes, please explain.
- This district is being revitalized: What would you like to see happen here?
- Other comments: (add your own)



APPENDIX D: Promotional Materials

Sample: business card-sized invitations handed out to pedestrians, cyclists and allotment gardeners in the Port Lands, and to anyone else interested in the Walk project



The Port Lands
SENSORY WALK

Your presence is requested
Explore the unique dynamics of the Port Lands' natural, recreational and industrial forces.

Artist-led Walks start at the south end of
Cherry St. Bridge ~ 155 Cherry St.
Mon. Sep. 2, 11 a.m. Fri. Sep. 6, 11 a.m.
Sun. Sep. 8, 11 a.m. Sat. Sep. 14, 10 a.m.

portlandswalk.com

Flyer sample: posted in the Port Lands along the Martin Goodman Trail, and at the non-profit wind surfing club and sailing clubs on Regatta Road. This is version of four, announcing the last public artist led Walk (scaled to 63% original size to fit page).

The Port Lands SENSORY WALK

Your presence is requested

Explore the dramatic dynamics of the Port Lands' natural, recreational and industrial forces

Artist led Walk starts at the south end
of Cherry St. Bridge ~ 155 Cherry St.
south of Commissioners St.

Sun. Oct. 13th, 10 a.m.

#portlandswalk
Post photos, comments
to the Facebook page

Self-guided walks are on
until October 31st,
facilitated by
onsite maps
and flags.

Created by
Lisa Binnie

portlandswalk.com