

Wanderings: LINIER

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Peripateo is a Spanish word, a construction between the prefix *Peri* (around of) and the noun *Pateo*, colloquial derivation from the verb *Patear* (walking a lot, travelling a long distance by foot).

The first proposal of the project LINIER took place on September 17th 2016 under the name of *It will all begin with a stroll. Going out of Barcelona by walking with Paco Navamuel*. The goal of this first “peripateo” was to walk out of the city through one of its major highway interchanges at the north, the so-called “Nus de la Trinitat”. We wanted to cross the intersection between the river Besós and three of the main traffic corridors of Barcelona (the “Ronda de Dalt”, the “Ronda Litoral” and the C-58). And we wanted to do so by walking until we had the physical sensation that we left the metropolitan urban environment.

Starting from one end of the district of Sant Andreu, we set the objective of crossing the river and get to the neighbourhood of Singuerlín, a zone in the municipality of Santa Coloma de Gramanet. There was only one premise to follow: we should not use any road or infrastructure that had been designed with a vehicle in mind. None of the participants knew the area from a pedestrian

point of view, for as much as all of them travelled through it, countless times, using some mean of locomotion –either by car, by bus or by train.

Crossing Sant Andreu was relatively easy. We strolled around the streets and we enjoyed its various urban realities and stories. We took note of the new neighbourhoods, which were built literally onto the remains of an old periphery that grew irregular in the past. We looked at the industrial zones and the quarters of “Casas baratas” –small and cheaply made houses built by newcomers during the sixties–. We experienced the geographical limits and the historical memory of the place through the empty spaces. There were actually no ruins, but the urban voids surely acted as “monuments” to a past to be gone. New constructions threatened the old settlements in the zone of Bon Pastor, but we felt a strange sensation of peace and tranquillity during our transit anyway.

This feeling was soon interrupted as we arrived to our first obstacle: a stretch of the Ronda Litoral that was impossible to cross by foot. Actually, it was not just about impossible to cross, but it was also impossible to bear staying on the premises. The noise produced by the constant traffic was excruciating. It was then when we became aware that the landscape is polysensory, that we can feel it with all our senses.

This obstacle, this sound barrier, invited us to move towards the industrial zone or “polígono” between Bon Pastor and Baró de Viver up north, two neighbourhoods with parallel histories in a curious infinite transformation. We could observe from there the final destination of our walk on the other bank of the river, the colony of buildings of Oliveres, in Singuerlín. There was only a matter of finding a way to cross the mass of water that was not meant just for

vehicles. We resumed our walk and started trailing the Besós upstream, following the multiple railways that lay besides it.

The zone around the mouth of the river is pretty urbanized and has several options to go across, even if they are always shared with traffic. But the zone that goes upstream to the limits of Barcelona follows a completely different logic. As we went further and further north looking for a bridge, we were moving off from our destination. And even though we were certainly walking away, we had the impression that we were never completely leaving the city. Our drift had turned into a lineal walk in a desperate attempt to find a way through the other side.

The rich, kind, polysensory experience we had at the beginning of the “peripateo” was soon to be followed by the physicality of our own body in the form of fatigue, thirst and hunger. And these negative traits influenced the way we perceived the territory. Even though this “transurbanza” was held collectively, we were feeling in an individual manner. What had started as a shared and inclusive wandering transformed into a doubtful expedition. People began to feel lost, to be unable to identify in which geographical point were we. The idea that we were not going to accomplish our objective –that we were not going to make it to our destination– slowly appeared.

And that is the point: Linier does not propose to get anywhere. It is not about making a journey from point A to point B. The displacements, drifts, wanderings and “transurbanzas” experienced in the “peripateos” are just a way of being, understanding, registering, inhabiting and sharing a certain space with people

from different backgrounds. It is not about where are we heading to, but about what happens in between.

Linier does not propose anything that hasn't been already practised during the last century. What makes it different is how we register the route, how we map, digitalize and share what we see, as well as how we prioritize the searching and doing in situ. The aim is to make disappear, personally and collectively, through empirical practice, any preconceived idea about what we can find on the path.

That Saturday of September in 2016 we got completely lost, somewhere far away from our destination. In order to find a pedestrian bridge to the other side of the river, we ended up following our route up to the village of Montcada i Reixach. Then, we headed back redoing our steps along the opposite riverbank. And it was then when we were faced with a paradox: to leave Barcelona, to leave the city, we needed to go back towards it.

Note: The evolution of Linier as a project can be followed through its webpage, <http://linier.org/>