

Silent walk
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The 'silent walk' proposes a way, a process, on how to visit a place (τόπος), a site or a city, a way that always relates to the specificities of the current site and its community. In that sense, it cannot be transferred from place to place without taking in consideration the respective site.

Each place-τόπος, site or city, forms a different 'silent walk', which relates to the site itself, not only as a route, but also in relation to the instructions that are proposed by the artist, at several pre-determined pauses/stops during the walk.

What do we feel, perceive, and sense at the site, through the proposed 'silent walk' way? How can we highlight the specificities of the site, through this walk, at this particular place, through this particular route?

There are however, some features that the practice itself reveals. The 'loss' of time, during a rather slow walk, the internal dialogues that occur within the bodies of the participants, a collective group rhythm, and sometimes a meditative state of body/mind that is created and described as 'mindlessness', 'loss' or 'distraction'.

Starting from these general characteristics of the practice, my aim each time is to propose questions that later in the process take the form of tasks. Thus we create paths that make us see the current site from many different angles, and in diverse ways, in order to open up new spaces in our perception, sensation, and imagination.

The 'silent walk' on the **4th and 5th of December 2021**, takes place at the centre of Zurich, in one of the city's most central parks, and is conceived especially for the **Orangerie & Bonsai Garten**, its environs, and the community.

Apart from what we will learn cognitively when we visit the garden, what other tools can we activate to 'see', 'feel' and 'sense' the Orangerie & Bonsai Garten from different perspectives? What are those parts of the garden that our eyes would definitely not 'miss' in our first visit? What about the opposite? Apart from all those that are seen, are there new parts, sites and places that are now, with this walk revealed? How do narratives around the Orangerie & Bonsai Garten inform our walk? How can we set to explore the Orangerie & Bonsai Garten in relation to time, and its now-ness? What new perspectives emerge, that add up to its understanding?



Stop walking and focus on the first tree you see around you. Go closer to it, and start examining its characteristics. The roots, its branches and trunk. How do you see it, sense it, in relation to your body? How close or far is it from your body? How tall, or short, soft or hard, or flexible, is the tree in relation to you? Examine its lines and forms, in relation to diverse body parts. In relation to your upper body, your lower body, your feet, your head. Get a bit closer to it, and examine the space, air, light, distances and depths, sensations, memories, exchange and circulations between your body, the tree, and other bodies and trees in space. Stay in this position. Listen, for about 3'. I will let you know when we will move on.

Let's focus on what happens underneath our feet this time. First feel the ground under your feet. Does it feel soft or hard? Wet? (notice if it *feels* wet, not if it actually is) or dry? Cold or warm? Feel your gravity and how heavy are your feet on the ground. What is underneath them? Grass? Soil? Mud? Snow? Now, literally look under your feet, on the ground, and notice how many creatures (if any) are moving, jumping, walking, running? How do you sense their gravity in relation to yours?



Stop moving and find a way to get closer to the ground. From this position imagine a small bonsai tree, a *pinus parvifolia*, (don't worry if you don't know the name) appearing before you. It's green and beautiful. And a lemon tree, with many juicy lemons appears. How do they look? Do their appearance inform the whole environment around you and how? Do you maybe see sunshine suddenly shining above you? Do you maybe feel warmer? Or do you imagine the bonsai covered with snow? How this imaginary of the appearance of a bonsai tree and a lemon tree, inform your walk up to now, and this specific moment?



I want us now to pay attention to anything that includes water around us. Where do you see, feel, hear water? Is it in the form of a small pond, does it come from the hills, is it imaginary or real? Where does it flow from, and towards where does it go? How many directions and levels does it have? Does it end up in the river?

In a while, not yet, but in a while, in the garden, two dry streams from the hill on the left, join, before our eyes. The imaginary water flows around the house to the right.

This time, I would like to let our eyes wonder around, until we find the mountains. How far are they from here? Are they real or imaginary? Pay attention to the alpine landscape. What are the plants you see, or imagine in this environment? Maybe a *Rhododendron* (from Ancient Greek *ródon* *rhódon*"rose" and *dévdron* *déndron*"tree") appears before your eyes. It may be Pink, Purple, Red, White, or Yellow in color, and you know it attracts birds. In late spring to early summer, the air around the flowers can be delightfully scented with a sweet and spicy clove scent reminiscent of cottage pinks and carnations. In the garden, the 'alpine landscape garden' harmoniously integrates the modern weekend house into its surroundings. Further out, the garden merges into nature, which has been left undisturbed by humans. Newly planted in the garden: larches, rowan, rhododendrons, and erica from the area.



I would like us now to listen to a song. This song was written by Richard Wagner, who lived here, at villa Schöenberg, right across the street. from April 1857 to July 1858 and experienced a fruitful creative phase here. Wagner wrote large parts of *Tristan und Isolde* here and set five poems by his muse Mathilde Wesendonck to music to create the famous *Wesendonck Lieder*. I would like us to listen to one of them now. I like to imagine him, wondering around the villa, restless, going up and down the floors of the villa in order to find inspiration. I like to imagine a light still lit on one of the windows of the villa, where Wagner is staying awake until very late in the night to compose these songs. Let's hear them now.

There is one more bit of information related to the story, that I would like to share with you now. Wagner's wife, Minna, writes about the same period Wagner leaves Zurich for good, writes the

following to Matilde Wesendonck : *"I must tell you with a bleeding heart that you have succeeded in separating my husband from me after nearly twenty-two years of marriage. May this noble deed contribute to your peace of mind, to your happiness"*.

I left for last, to talk about this space we are in now. I would like to give us some time to look at the space. Again as before, I would propose to look with our eyes, hear with our ears, sense with our senses. What is it now, what was it before and what will it be, in the future, this space?

If you didn't know anything about this space, what would you imagine about it?

There are actually some things I would like to reveal about this space, that might help with the imaginary.

So, imagine two towers.

On the left hand side there is a palm tree tower and a heating tower.

There is a story- personal story related to this side. The story is entitled: *'My personal palm tree tower phantasy'*, and it is about a palm tree that once existed, and at some point it died. And it was kept well right after, into a pot, adding colorful flowers next to it, to keep him/her company. And some lights to make it shine. And the pot is covered with a golden fabric.

On the right hand side, there is the flat, low, isolated, but still in ensembles composed, part of the garden-bonsais- zen garden.

At the side, towards the back of the park, guiding into the open space, the great tree landscape.
Nature