

# The Mobile Imagination: Walking-mapping-narrating Landscape Futures

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*This article considers the continued agency of the body in movement as an active means of reading and reimagining the urban landscape. Using a design study, which reconsiders the gridded island of Manhattan through a walk down Broadway, the article introduces an activist landscape design methodology where field-walking as exploratory mapping yields multilinear narratives to generate landscape futures. The article begins with a description of this study, then transitions into its broader situation within and implications for landscape architectural methodology.*

**Keywords:** *Walking, mapping, narrative, design, urban landscape, Broadway, mobile fieldwork*

An investigation of the so-called “new mobilities paradigm” (Sheller and Urry 2006) warrants significant scholarship on the digitally-mediated condition of contemporary life and its intersections with other forms of mobility – embodied and/or mediated. This article considers the persistent agency of the body in movement as an active form of constructing and imagining the urban landscape. It is not intended to be a nostalgic or reactionary insistence on physicality in the face of technological “alienation,” but rather a recognition of the peripatetic explorer as still relevant in a world that is evermore virtual. Recognizing the history of walking as a symbolic, aesthetic and political practice, one particular design study provides a framework through which to investigate issues that Sheller and Urry might refer to as a “material and sociable dwelling-in-motion” (Sheller and Urry 2006, 214). As a study of the *map* as representation and *mapping* as embodied practice (Wiley 2010), the article additionally explores the dialectical relationship between mediation and embodiment in landscape architecture. Finally and most specifically, this project provides a vehicle through which to introduce an activist landscape design methodology where

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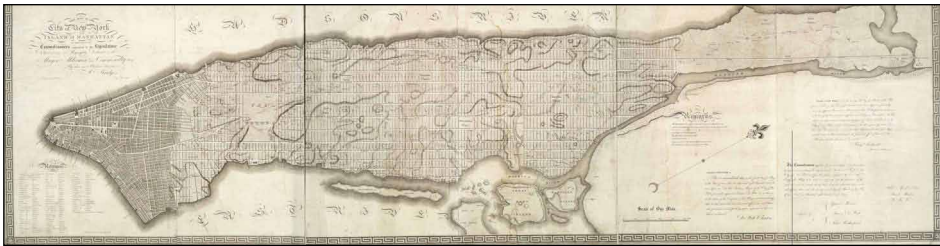
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fieldwalking as exploratory *mapping* yields *maps* that open up multilineal narratives to generate new ways of navigating and experiencing the urban landscape. The study is described first in depth and then contextualized within literature related to the discourses of walking (the city), mapping, narrating (as a spatial operation). The introduction of this tripartite process aims to productively contribute to landscape architectural methods.

The design study was initiated as a proposal for “The Greatest Grid: A Call for Ideas,” co-organized by the Museum of the City of New York and the New York Architectural League. Our submission, titled “Transgressing the Grid,” served as an investigation into the everyday experience of the physical structure of Manhattan conducted through the lens of its famous rogue street – Broadway. It situates Broadway as a key agent in shaping our lived experience of Manhattan’s grid and provides a means to critically explore contested modes of apprehending and structuring the city. The competition brief, which celebrates the transformative 1811 Commissioner’s Plan for New York (Figure 1), requested that entrants “propose new ways for thinking about how the street grid shapes life in New York” (Greatest Grid).

**Figure 1:** The Commissioners’ Plan, 1811.



Source: John Randel, Jr., “A Map of the city of New York by the commissioners appointed by an act of the legislature passed April 3rd 1807.” New York Municipal Archives.

The winning entries offered “visionary” proposals, which adopted the totalizing and distanced view of the New York Commissioners. The design process adopted here began instead with direct physical engagement with the city and its mobility infrastructures. Through the aesthetic practice of walking, the dying medium through which the city was once perceived and enjoyed, the authors (Hirsch and Gabrielian, herein referred to as “the authors”) explored and reframed the symbiosis that exists between the grid and the resilient street that predated and transgressed it. As then inhabitants of the city and devoted peripatetic explorers, the authors recognized that the 1811 grid plan offers comfort through reliable orientation, while its relentless uniformity also allows the appreciation of its rare discontinuities. Conversely, it is only through the idiosyncrasies created by Broadway that the true nature of the measured grid becomes visible to the inhabitants on the street. The performative

and interpretive method yielded four new ways of conceiving the dynamic relationship between Broadway and the grid, focusing not just on spatial structure but on the durational experience of that structure.

## BROADWAY

A brief history of the mobility infrastructures that shaped the surface of Manhattan provides a foundation for the revelations of this case study. Through the eighteenth century, settlement in the southern tip of Manhattan Island densified according to local circumstance rather than formal plans. Upon the appointment of the Commissioners in 1807, the remainder of the island still consisted of farms, meadows, woods, ponds and marshes situated amongst hills shaped by stream valleys and meandering country roads (Figure 2). Before the grid, the road network developed incrementally, taking advantage of topographic opportunities. For instance, Lower Broadway, the main axis of the colonial city, followed the island's natural ridgeline, while in the northwest, Bloomingdale Road (which constitutes the majority of today's Broadway), ran along the crest of the rise above the Hudson River.

**Figure 2:** British Headquarters Map, plans 1 and 2 [joined] of New York, Long Island, Hudson River, East River, showing British and American fortifications, c. 1782.



Note: The map was drawn by military cartographers toward the end of the American Revolution. Source: The National Archives, United Kingdom, MR 1/463.

The Commissioners' grid tamed the wildness and unpredictability of the island's former self (Sanderson, 2009). It was not until the latter half of the nineteenth century that the idea of "wilderness" – which had embodied the "antithesis of all that was orderly and good" (Cronon 1996, 71) – was deemed sacred by the American public (Cronon 1996). Thoreau's catalytic declaration in his essay on "Walking," published after his death in the *Atlantic Monthly* (1863) exemplifies this transformation: "In Wilderness is the preservation of the World" (2012). Between today's 14th and 155th Streets, the great topographic variety of "Mannahatta," or the "Island of Many Hills" (named by the island's pre-colonial inhabitants), was surveyed and di-

vided into a neutralizing grid of coordinates for ease of surveillance, access, and land speculation. The grid has since come to define the spatial and temporal experience of the island. By the 1860s, however, Central Park Commissioner Andrew Haswell Green, with Central Park's landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, led efforts to ensure the preservation of the dramatically varied terrain in the upper portions of the island by situating the extension of Broadway ("The Boulevard") above 155th Street on the highlands, rather than on the western shore, in order to provide scenic views (Ballon, 2012).

In the 1811 Plan, the Commissioners retained Broadway only until 23rd Street, where it met up with a planned "Parade." Further north, the timeless abstraction of the grid was intended to erase the street that had embodied an earlier past. However, Bloomingdale and Kingsbridge Roads appear on the Commissioners' Plan as dotted lines to (ironically) orient and locate citizens within the "disorienting" grid for the new city. The meandering Bloomingdale Road remained in use and was thus gradually reinstated on the map during the mid-nineteenth century. In 1899 these sections were consolidated under the name Broadway. However, while Broadway became a continuous street that subverted the order of the grid, its structure reflected a compromise – as each section (of Bloomingdale Road) "was officially incorporated in the city map, it was also retraced as a straight line, whether angled or aligned with the grid... Broadway is [thus] both a relic of the past and a new artifact designed to work with the grid" (Ballon 2012, 155).

While the island's hills are clearly recognizable on the British Headquarters Map of New York (Figure 2), so are the "country roads" stretching northward, many of which had begun as precolonial footpaths. Rather than a prescribed route, footpaths emerge over time through immediacy of everyday need and use. Broadway persists as an indelible reminder – a trace of the pre-grid geography. As the island's anchor to a pre-grid past and as Manhattan's longest street, Broadway thus supports the grid and makes visible its persistent structure.

## CASE STUDY: "TRANSGRESSING THE GRID"

In 1868, Broadway above 59th Street was widened and made verdant. "The Boulevard," as it was known after the great European precedents, became the site of promenading, a theatrical ritual based on the pleasures of movement while seeing and being seen. Using walking as an initial design medium – traversing the length of Broadway in a single day equipped with cameras and sketchbooks – the city was registered in a similar timeless way. While laying out the grid required fourteen years of surveyor John Randel Jr.'s laborious precision, in this study footsteps acted as the surveyor's compass with the enticements of today's Broadway incentivizing forward movement. This kinesthetic appropriation of arguably the most dynamic street in

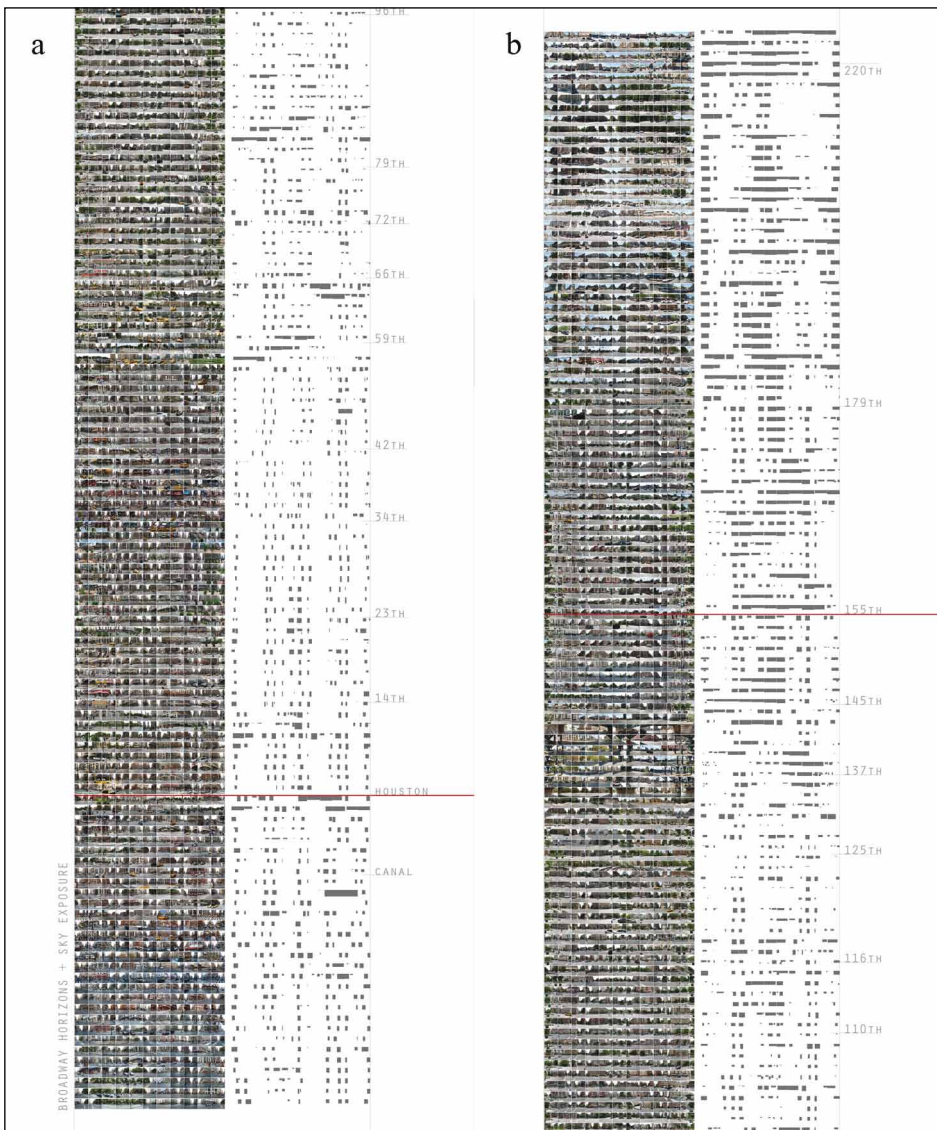
Manhattan – the quintessential embodiment of spectacle and movement – revealed tactical opportunities for spatial reinvention.

The exploratory fieldwalking-as-mapping process ultimately yielded four design tactics that provoke multiple narratives for the city's possible futures. The study began at Broadway's northernmost point on Manhattan Island (just before it bridges the Harlem River connecting the Bronx) and continued south to Houston Street where the grid breaks down. The walk was highly disciplined, stopping each time the grid intersected with Broadway to gather "data" – drawn sections, sightlines and 360-degree photographic panoramas. This "data" was ultimately interpreted back in the studio through remapping and revisioning the city otherwise. The following four speculations are titled with the predominant themes that emerged to inform four urban revisions. These themes are particularly related to *walking and/as mapping* as an activist practice, or how bodies measure territory through mobile fieldwork and how the interpretation of that fieldwork in maps facilitates new ways of seeing and understanding urban space. The *narrating* component of the tripartite method emerges out of the perspectival views that both provide one possible storyline (of many) and act as prompts for further imaginings (to be addressed in the subsequent sections):

### (1) *Horizon (Topography)*

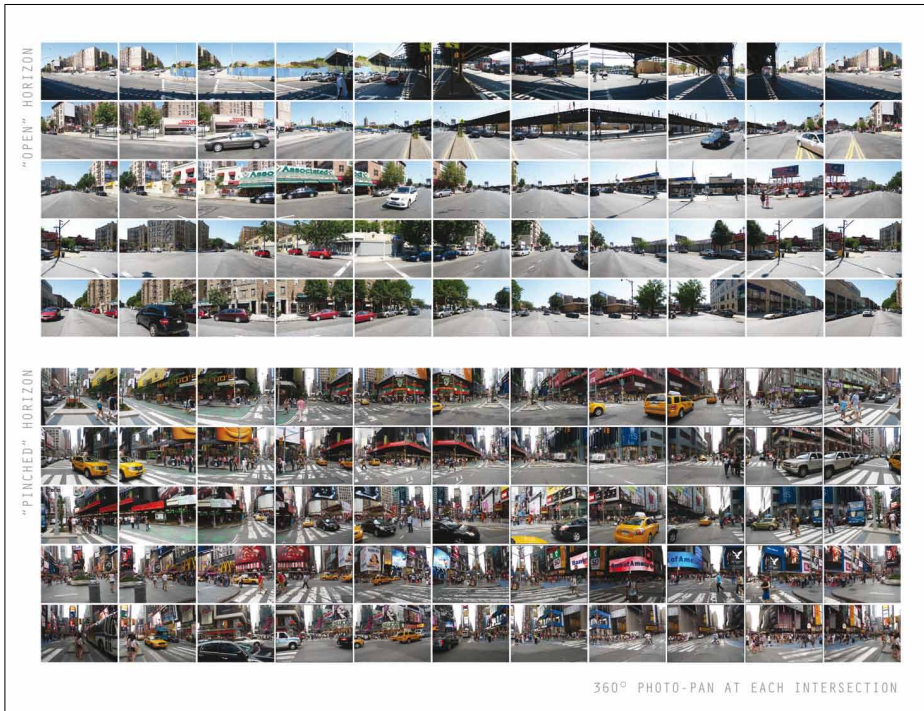
The horizon orients the body in relation to its greater territory. A 360-degree photographic sequence taken each time the grid crosses Broadway, stretches Broadway's horizon, unrolling it into a gridded field (Figures 3-4). When Broadway transforms from a line to a field, it is reframed as a place rather than a means to get from one point to another. The relentless linear perspective of the grid makes the walk along other avenues a redundant pinching of the horizon. Because of Broadway's transgressive nature, the walker experiences a multiplicity of unpredicted perspectives and varied relationships to the sky, which were extracted from the panoramic sequence (see notation to right of photographs in Figure 3, where grey indicates the sky where visible). The resulting notation reveals this latent rhythm and serves as the framework from which we propose a topographic intervention that diversifies the body's relationship with both the ground and sky (Figure 5). This elevational idea opened up multiple narrative threads – the beginnings of one pictured here (Figure 6).

**Figure 3:** The 360-degree photographic sequence taken each time the grid crosses Broadway (left), with the extracted notation of the expanding and contracting horizon (right).



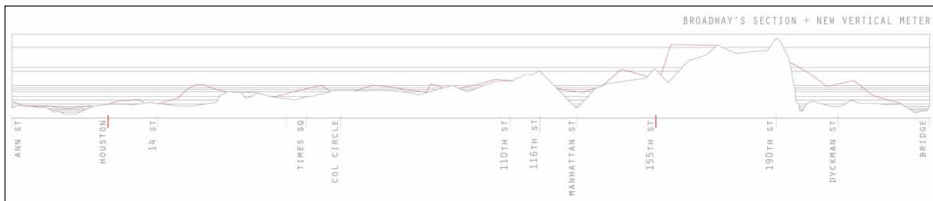
Note: For purposes of legibility, this image has been split into two segments (3a & 3b)

**Figure 4:** Details from the photographic sequence taken along Broadway (top is north; bottom is south).



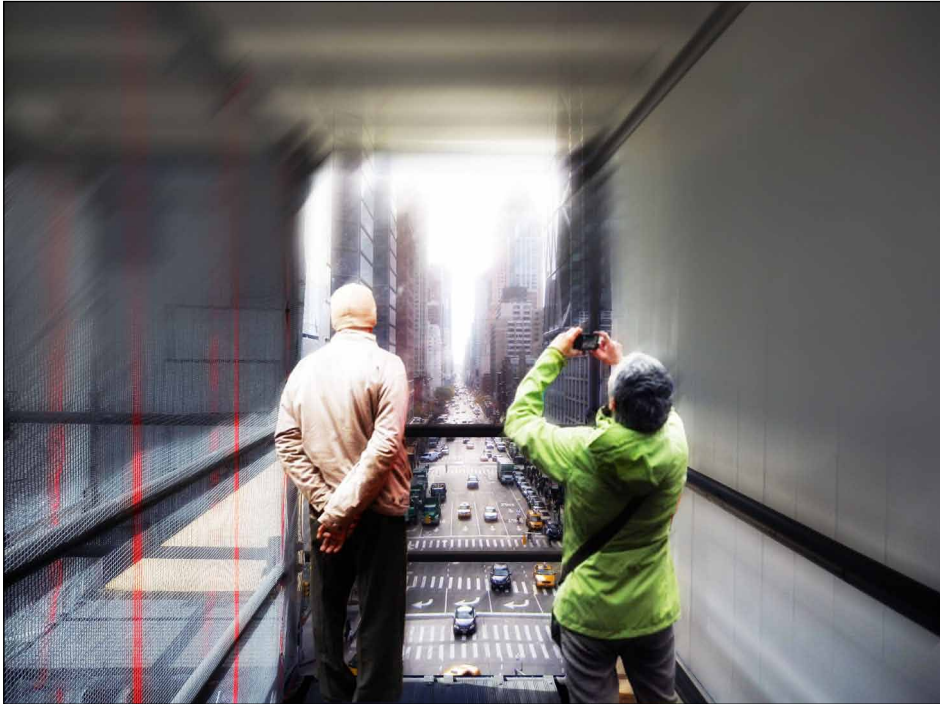
Note: Rather than a monotonous compressed glimpse of the sky through the vertical frame of buildings, Broadway offers a more varied horizon.

**Figure 5:** Broadway's topographic variety



Note: Broadway has an inherent topographic variety, indicated by the section line (with obvious exaggeration to the vertical scale). By shifting the body above Broadway at opportune moments (red line), we amplify this already distinct relationship to the horizon.

**Figure 6:** New urban scaffolding.

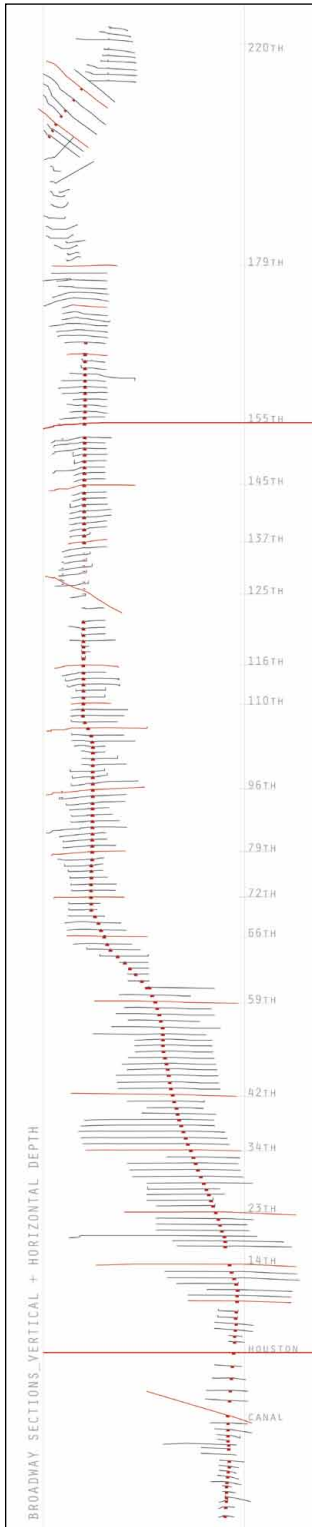


Note: Broadway is constantly remaking itself (like much of Manhattan but arguably more). New signs and billboards are erected, grand facades are updated, storefronts change in efforts to outdo the neighbors. Supporting this activity is an endlessly shifting landscape (and horizon) of scaffolding intended for protection and access to the upper limits of the street wall. This emergent narrative introduces a new urban scaffolding that invites the city's inhabitants to participate in these new perspectives of the street and relationships with the sky.

## ***(2) Depth (Infrastructure)***

Despite the leveling of Manhattan while implementing the grid, Broadway retains a sectional thickness, which was mapped through a series of sequential sections drawn at each Broadway intersection with the grid (Figure 7). The length of the section line implies the visual depth of field for each of the cross-streets. The fieldwalk drawing thus notates vertical and horizontal depth. Broadway's topographic variety in the north and south is enhanced by its subgrade network of subways and aqueducts (Figure 8), which presented opportunities for new forms of appropriating and exploring the city (Figures 9-10).<sup>1</sup>





**Figure 7:** Sequential sections taken at each of Broadway's crossings.

Note: The length of the section line implies the depth of visual field down each of the cross-streets. The fieldwalk drawing thus notates vertical and horizontal depth.

**Figure 8:** “Proposed Arcade Railway Under Broadway” lithograph (New York: Ferdinand Mayer & Sons, lithographers, and Melville C. Smith, projector, c. 1868).



Note: This proposal for a depressed Arcade Railway along Lower Broadway called for the conversion of cellars of street-level buildings into new subterranean shops. It provided imaginative fodder for our subgrade proposals. Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA (LC-DIG-pga-02127).

**Figure 9:** Kayaking in the aqueducts.



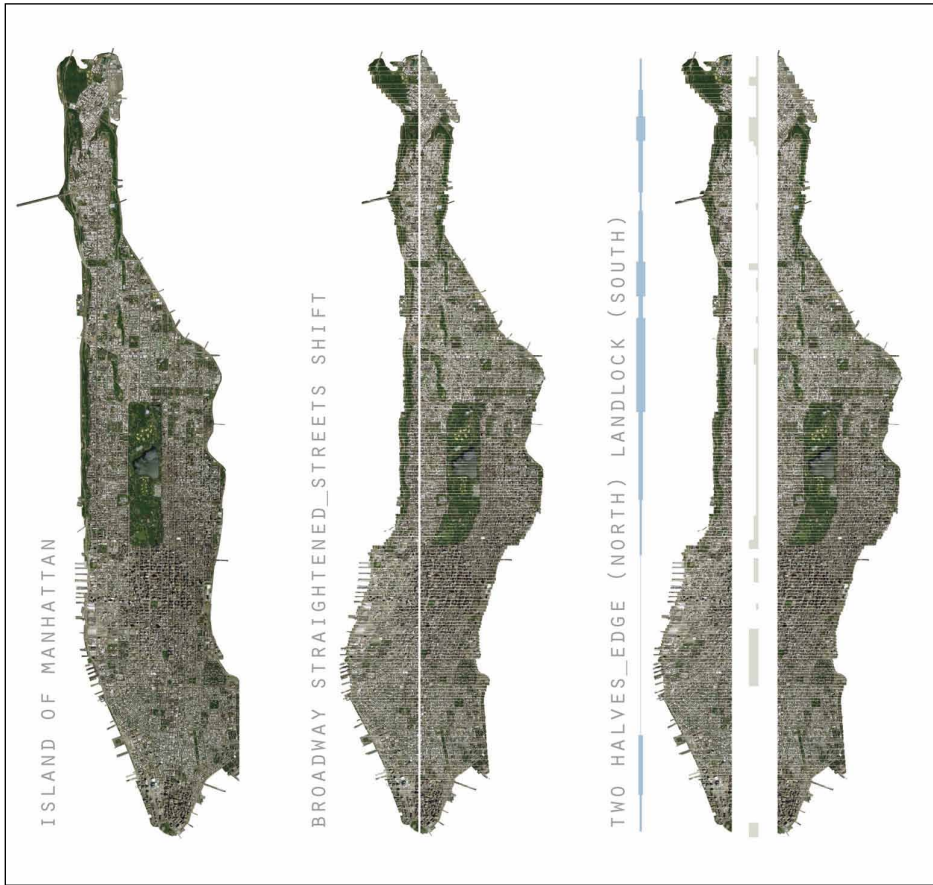
Note: From an elevated position, the grid is comprehensible, from the ground, it is understood, but the transgressive spaces below the city offer the ultimate opportunity to get lost.

**Figure 10:** Promenading in the subway tunnels.

### ***(3) Datum (Ecology)***

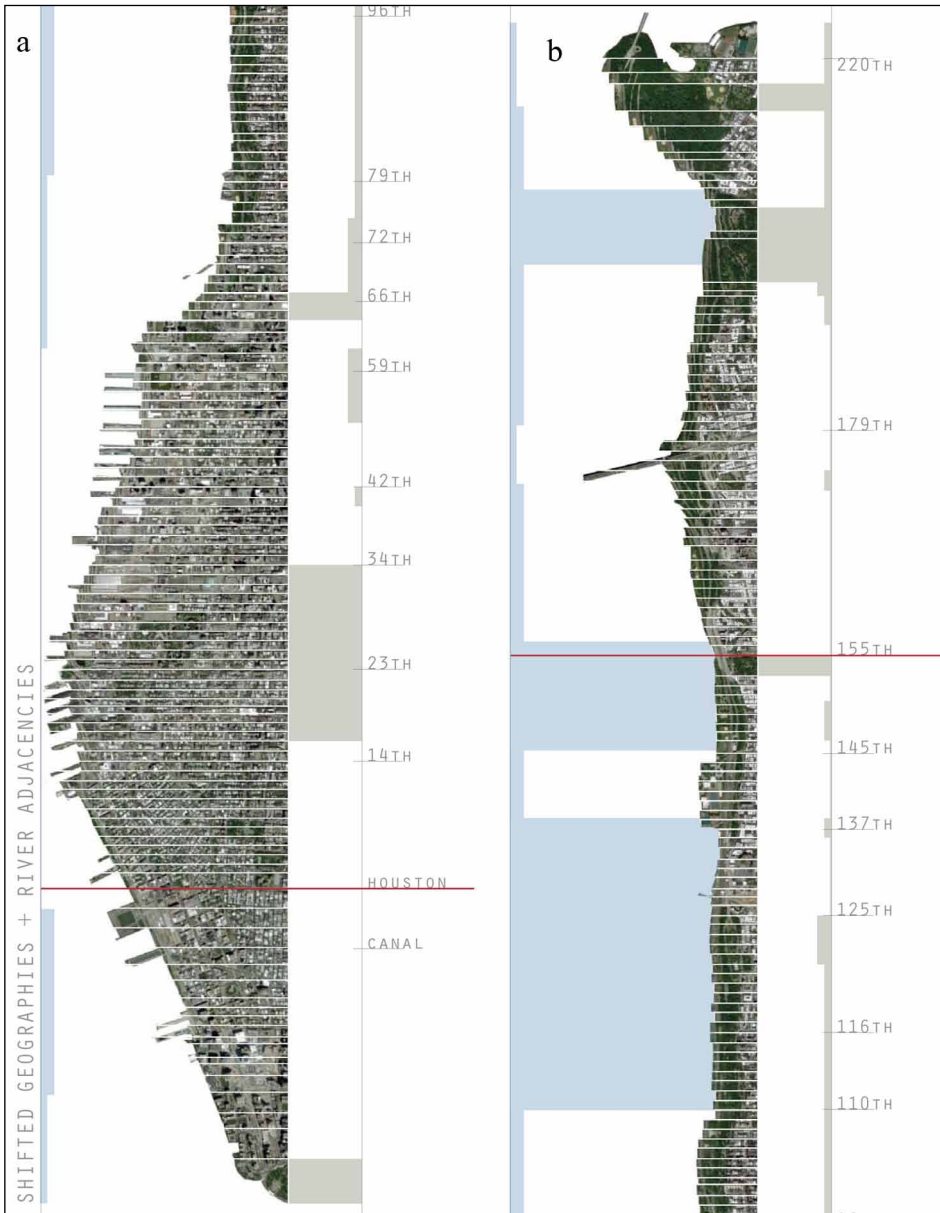
Connecting the grid in physical extent to its territorial surrounds (Broadway stretches north and south of the grid) and historical depth to its foundational substrate, Broadway is the grid's backbone; it "holds" the grid. When Broadway is drawn as a straight line, to reinforce its significance as the island's consistent datum, the grid transforms its unforgiving rigidity to a fluid system of shifting geographies that reveal latent relationships (Figure 11). Just as the walk down Broadway – peering into the grid's east-west streets – reveals shifting relationships to the island's aqueous edges (as do the walking sections), the drawing of the straightened Broadway accentuates its adjacency to the Hudson River in the north and its tightly landlocked condition in the south (Figure 12). This inspired a strengthened exchange between Broadway at the crest of the rise and the river at its base through a physical weaving of ecologies from each system (Figure 13). In the south, the proposal introduces an "edge ecology" on Broadway – a "wild" riparian character made possible by rain catchment from the streets (Figure 14).

**Figure 11:** Revelatory map(ping).



Note: The notation in the third drawing (right) indicates the degree of proximity of Broadway to the Hudson River (blue) and to open space (green).

**Figure 12:** Broadway straightened and the island's resulting edge.



Note: The blue and gray notation registers the proximity of Broadway to the river (blue; left) and to open space (gray; right), while the red lines in south and north indicate Houston (south) to 155th Street (the northern reach of the 1811 Commissioners' Plan).

**Figure 13:** North Broadway reimagined through a physical weaving of ecologies from each system. Along the Hudson River.



**Figure 14:** Lower Broadway.



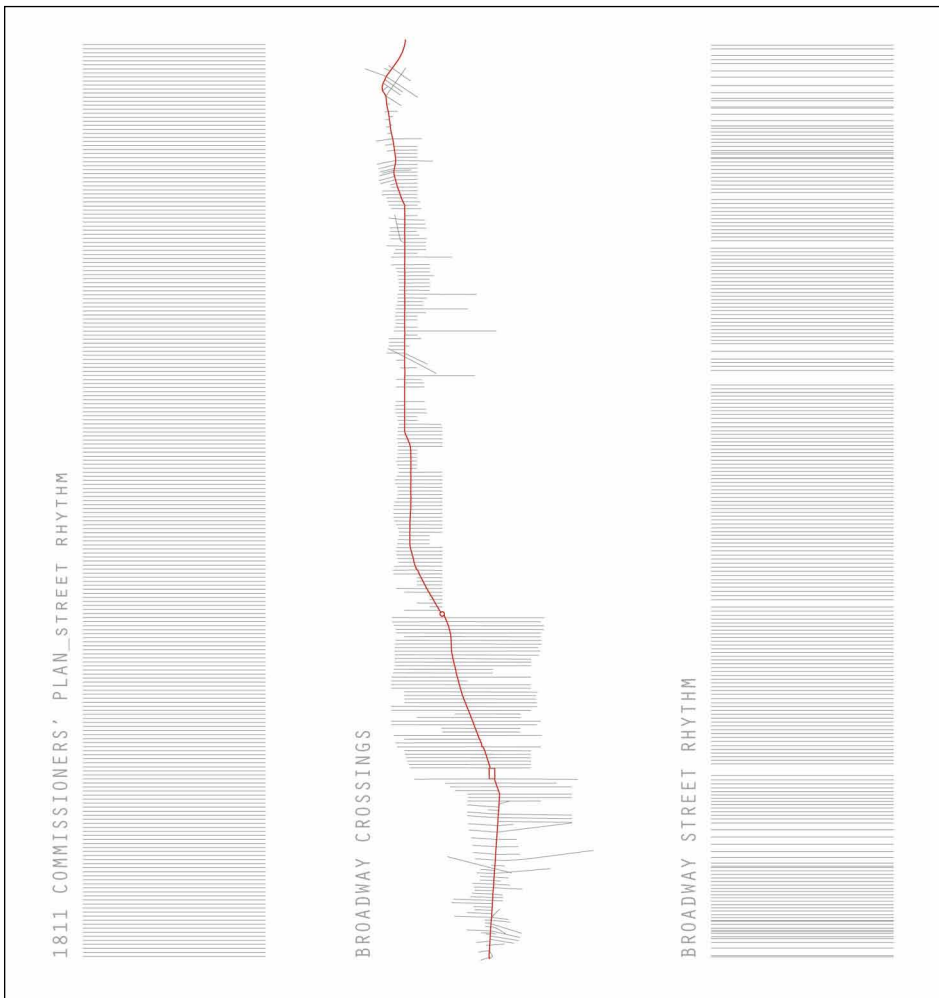
Note: Because lower Broadway is deep in the interior of the island, awareness of the city's geography and ecology diminishes. Here a performative edge ecology is integrated into the experience of Broadway.

#### *(4) Meter (Program)*

Although the grid offers a reliable metric to our peripatetic experience, one can easily become habituated to its predictable structure (one minute per block; 20 blocks per mile, etc.). Broadway increases duration. Around the street's bends, the rhythm shifts, stretching time. In contrast to the repetitive structure of the east-west crossings over the north-south avenues, with footsteps the authors recorded the transgressive reprises of the street crossings over Broadway (Figure 15). Through this interjection of "difference" (Lefebvre 2004), the walker is awakened from habituated or routinized movement and forced to confront the environment with fuller kinesthetic awareness. Yet because of the subtleties of its kinks, the experience of Broadway is of walking a straight line with the grid coming at it obliquely (rather than vice versa). Therefore, taking the original walking survey of the crossings over Broadway, it is again straightened on paper, this time sustaining its angular relationship to its cross-streets. Through this revelatory drawing, the grid ceases to be a grid and, instead, becomes a complex web of overlapping relationships (Figure 16). By identifying the "nodes" of the most significant points of convergence, a new urban network emerges (see Figure 16), which is transposed back onto the existing street plan. The location of these nodes offers opportunities for a new matrix of related spaces introduced into the physical fabric of the city (Figures 17-18).

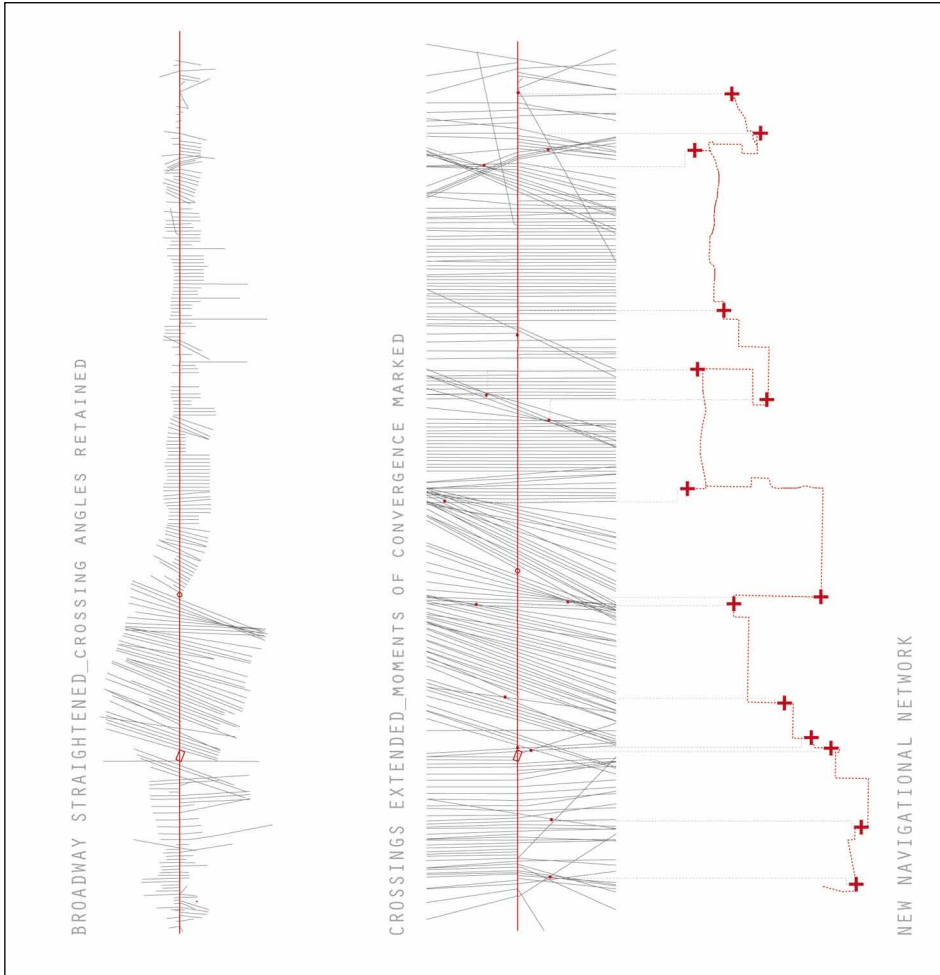
While critical of the generalizations of the synoptic view, the authors switch comfortably between plan, section and perspective drawings, emphasizing, when appropriate, the latter two as the true horizon of the walker. The authors oscillate between mapping (verb) as an embodied practice and "the map" (noun) as representation – where each informs the other. In addition, the perspectival views – though more "complete" and singular or static than exploratory mappings – intend to stimulate the imagination to envision new realities or spatial narratives. They are only a small number of possible narratives the mappings have the capacity to yield. This design study serves as a platform to discuss the methodological potentials of walking-mapping-narrating landscape futures more generally.

**Figure 15:** The regularized meter of the Commissioners' Plan of 1811 (left); the crossings over Broadway as we recorded on our walk (middle); the meter (of repetition and difference) experienced down Broadway (right).

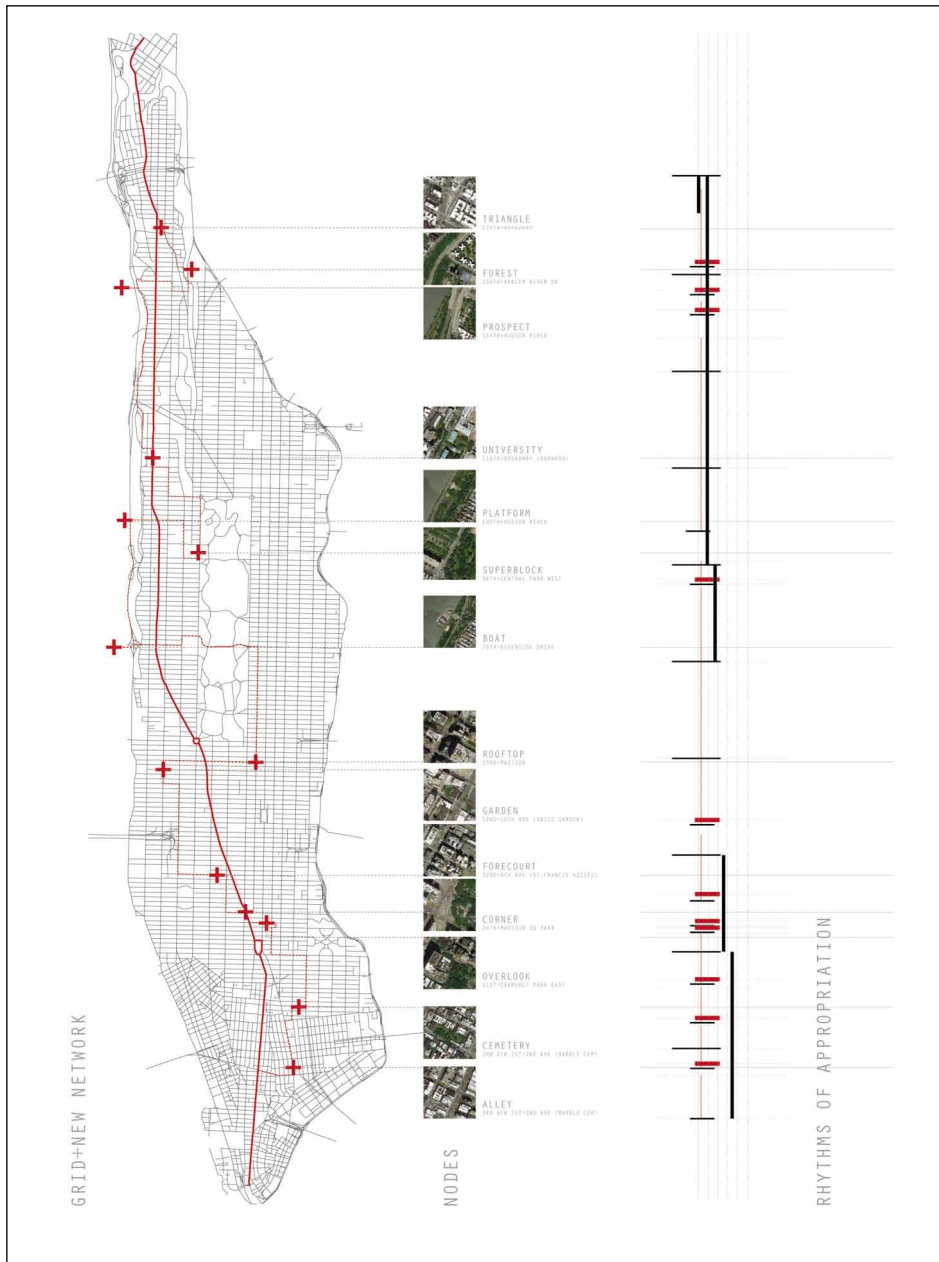




**Figure 16:** The revelatory process of mapping beginning with straightened Broadway in relationship with its cross-streets (left); crossings extended (middle) with dense points of convergence identified; and points of convergence (“nodes”) extracted from the “mapping” of extended crossings (right).



**Figure 17:** The new network of public convergence transposed onto the street grid.



Note: Aerial photographs of those new “nodes” are extracted to the right, while a calendar of programmatic occupation is projected in the drawing to the far right. While much attention is given the triangular lots created by the diagonals of Broadway – as unsuitable

for development and thus providing opportunities for public space – this network resituates those opportunities for public gathering back into the grid at unexpected moments.

**Figure 18:** A hidden cemetery adapted for alternative use.



## WALKING

“You’ve got to get out and walk.”  
(Jane Jacobs, *Downtown is for People*, 1958)

“Walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories it ‘speaks.’”  
(Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1984)

“When I go out of the house for a walk, uncertain as yet whither I will bend my steps, [I] submit myself to my instinct to decide for me...”  
(Henri David Thoreau, “Walking,” 1863)

Mobile fieldwork is, of course, not a “new paradigm.” Active fieldwork and “field-walking” are practices long common to land surveying, ecology and archaeology (among many other disciplines increasingly in the social sciences). As a medium that is itself in constant flux, landscape is best understood moving through time across space and landscape designers have sought to optimize this “experience of motion” throughout the ages with particular deliberateness (in Western traditions) in the eighteenth century Picturesque practice of garden-making and its impact on the design of cities (Conan, 2003; Bergdoll, 2000). In other words, the centuries-old

understanding that landscape is a spatio-temporal medium challenges the “newness” of such a paradigm as applied to landscape architecture.<sup>2</sup>

Ancient land surveying techniques, which served as a precedent to this study, synthesized the body with instruments of measure to construct space and layout towns. In *The Idea of a Town*, Joseph Rykwert (1976) describes an Etruscan and Roman ritual of walking the bounds in the laying out or “constituting” towns (Jacks 2004). In addition, the medieval practice of “beating the bounds” or perambulations were annual Rogation rites (according to the Christian liturgical calendar) where inhabitants of a parish gathered to walk, mark and verify its bounds (Bonaventura, 2007; Stilgoe, 1976). The social performance of these land surveying techniques, which claim and construct territory, provide a foundation for an activist design methodology in the context of mobility studies.

Walking as a critical medium is often associated with the Situationists, the European avant-garde group founded in 1957, and their psychogeographic “drifts” (*dérives*) through the city.<sup>3</sup> Yet the Situationists attempted to subvert the rational order and consumer expressions of the “Society of the Spectacle” (Debord, 1970) through radical acts of *détournement* (or strategic disruption), while our walk – though also critical – became the instrument for a more transgressive (than subversive) commentary. According to George Bataille, “Transgression opens the door into what lies beyond the limits usually observed, but it maintains those limits just the same” (1987, 67). Rather than a radical break with the given framework, we found inspiration in the spatio-temporal tensions between these two mobility systems – the grid and Broadway. As Michel de Certeau (1984) claims, walking “transgresses,” providing curious access to idiosyncrasies incomprehensible in scale when the city is viewed from above.

Broadway could be deemed a relic of the “authentic” city the Situationists hoped to unearth through their drifts, as it survived the rationalization of the city by the grid. However, while Broadway might not fit into the singular imageability of the grid, it is far from untouched by the spaces of capitalist consumption as defined by the Situationists. Simultaneously, its rogue disobedience creates residual spaces that are hard to synthesize into the wholeness of the Commissioners’ Plan. Many of these tensions became the impetus for our ambulatory study.

Yet unlike the Situationists’ *dérives* and the detached observation of the nineteenth century *flâneur*, who was similarly critical of the anonymity of modern life in the city, our walk was not a “wander” but an active “taking to the streets.” Adopting the deliberateness of Jane Jacobs and even Thoreau, both quoted above (despite the latter’s so-declared “submission”), the authors embarked on the walk, seeking to uncover previously unforeseen connections between the two grounds of Manhattan: the inherited (Broadway) and the imposed (grid). Like “walking the line” of Broadway (Long, 2005), walking artist Richard Long begins with a prescribed route and uses this as a path of open-ended discovery along its length. Using his body as measure, his ambulatory work reveals environmental relationships by

focusing on the relativity of his moving body to the speed of natural phenomena around him (Long, 2005). Similarly, the walk here is structured, almost algorithmic – as a form of measure – with the disciplined rhythm of our walk providing a point of reference (the “control”) to measure episodes of difference.

Finally, de Certeau’s oft-cited focus on pedestrian movement (1984) is one of the number of everyday practices that he uses as examples to describe the underconsidered acts of “consumer production” – what the powerless “make” or “do” with the products of institutional systems, in this case, urban development. His chapter on walking begins at the top of the World Trade Center, as the “most monumental figure of Western urban development,” where the synoptic view makes legible the “text” being written below. The reader quickly takes an “Icarian fall” to the streets below – “below the threshold at which visibility begins” – and where the city’s “ordinary practitioners... walk. They are walkers, *Wandersmanner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban ‘text’ they write without being able to read it” (1984, 91-93). While the authors cite de Certeau’s post-modern critique, the approach here is less about supporting or sustaining the practices of everyday life that spatialize the city and more about critically challenging “consumers” to be active citizens – to re-envision their city through a close and imaginative reading of the text they vigorously write.

## MAPPING

“Like a nomadic grazer, the exploratory mapper detours around the obvious so as to engage what remains hidden (Corner 1999, 225).”

“No rhythm without repetition in time and in space, without reprises, without returns, in short without measure. But there is no identical absolute repetition, indefinitely... When it concerns the everyday, rites, ceremonies, fêtes, rules and laws, there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference” (Lefebvre 2004, 6).

In the Broadway study, the city is interpreted through walking as survey, which is then translated into drawings that oscillate between the synoptic view (the plan or aerial) and the view from “down below” (the section, elevation and perspective). Drawing – as mediation – becomes an alternative means of seeing. When Broadway is drawn as a straight line in the proposals above, for instance, the authors are not proposing that this be actualized, but use this revisualization to unearth previously unseen geographic relationships, which then inform new possibilities for design of urban space.

These drawings can be situated within the discourse of “mapping” in the fields of geography and landscape architecture. Mapping is exploratory and investigative, as well as projective and imaginative, endowing landscape with structure and meas-

ure. In his book *Mappings*, geographer Denis Cosgrove states, “The map is both the spatial embodiment of knowledge and a stimulus to further cognitive engagements” (1999, 2). The process of translation here – from walking to representation, likewise, does not end with a “final” set of drawings, but provides a series of projections that provoke further interpretation and inquiry and hints at new narratives for urban space.

This interpretive practice focuses on the durational – the dynamic relationship of the mobile body with the mobile environment. The grid became an Enlightenment map made physically manifest – the totalized and fixed vision of the Cartesian system – neutralizing the contingencies of history and circumstance. The process of mapping here actively exploits the durational aspects of a temporal medium (walking) made particularly palpable through the measure provided by the regularized grid, which, when in dialog with Broadway, introduces that “something new and unforeseen” that Lefebvre describes as “difference” (2004, 6).

The mappings opened up multiple scenarios for re-imagining the city and the perspectival images (Figures 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 18) are intended as one of many possible narrative seeds or prompts to instigate these multilinear threads.

## NARRATING LANDSCAPE FUTURES

In his chapter on “Spatial Stories,” de Certeau (1984) makes a distinction between the “map” and the “story” or “itinerary” (he equates the latter two terms). He defines the map as a strategic and totalizing projection that is reductive and erases the infinite itineraries that spatialize the city. In contrast, he states, “In Greek, narration is called ‘diagesis’: it establishes an itinerary (it ‘guides’) and it passes through (it ‘transgresses’). The space of operations it travels in is made of movements: it is *topological*, concerning the deformation of figures, rather than *topical*, defining places” (1984, 129). Rather than the map, which delimits boundaries and fixes place, the narrative connotes spatial navigation, itineraries that transgress the “Concept City,” or the strategically planned city. Yet the authors use the view from above not as an instrument of control or conquest, but as a mediated (generalized) understanding of urban structure and its patterns and possibilities, not as a means to see more but as a way to see differently (Di Palma 2008). The authors do not propose totalizing interventions at this scale but explore how the reconfigured aerial view (the mediated mediation) might open up new ways of understanding the lived horizon and prompt new narratives about the city as lived.

Narratives emerging through movement has been the topic of inquiry in new media studies for at least two decades. Digital media theorist Lev Manovich (2001) cites de Certeau’s evocation of *diagesis* as a means to argue that exploratory movement through the virtual space of games, specifically *Doom* and *Myst*, yields emergent narratives. To Manovich, it is movement through this “space” that constructs

narrative, not the predetermined characters and events within the game. Similarly, in her discussion about locative media, media scholar Rita Raley argues, “the urban environment [is] a narrative space, with hidden layers to be discovered and explored” (2015, 306). Clearly these ideas of unearthing stories through exploratory movement are not new. “Travelers’ tales” or “travel writing” as a genre of mobile storytelling that imaginatively mixed fact and fiction can be traced to the Middle Ages through the Renaissance and beyond (Wolf 2012).

The perspectival images (see Figures 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 18) generated as the third component of the walking-mapping-narrating method are both intended as one of many responses the mapping process has the capacity to yield and as prompts to imagine new narratives for landscape’s many possible futures. Rather than closed and finished presentation drawings perhaps reflective of eighteenth century landscape designer Humphry Repton’s before-and-after views presented in his *Red Books* (1976), they are intended as stimuli for the unfolding of multiple narrative possibilities.

## CONCLUSION

This design study provides a platform to present a means of exploring the imaginative potential of itinerant research. The Broadway case clearly does not address the ethnographic agency of walking, yet borrowing from social sciences methods of itinerant or mobile ethnography has much to offer the shaping and design of urban space (Sheller and Urry 2006). Grounded and dynamic fieldwork that involves measuring or mapping patterns of movement, use and creative appropriation of marginal and institutionalized space at the local and territorial scale is another part of our practice – applying what the authors call “critical ethnography” (Hirsch 2016). The “critical ethnographer” uses extensive fieldwalking techniques and interprets observations of the local and, particularly, “the localization of globalized forces” (Holston and Appadurai 1998, 3), as an integral part of the design process.<sup>4</sup>

Rather, the Broadway study combines the dynamic medium of walking with exploratory mapping, to generate narrative provocations through which to imagine possible futures for the urban landscape. The method introduced here, which integrates and synthesizes these walking-mapping-narrating discourses, aims to contribute to landscape architectural methodologies and their expanding complexity. While this particular walk focused most on the structure of Manhattan rather than those infinite spatial stories written by the city’s inhabitants, the walk opened up the imaginative possibilities for the inscription of new urban narratives. Geographer Doreen Massey critiques the oppositional model set up by Michel de Certeau, particularly his dichotomous thinking between maps and itineraries, strategies and tactics, the latter of which he associates with space and time, respectively. She quotes him, “A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as *proper* (*propre*)... The ‘proper’ is a victory of space over time. On the contrary, because it does not have

a place, a tactic depends on time - it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized ‘on the wing’” (de Certeau, xix; in Massey 2005, 45). She finds the dichotomized relation set up between space and time as highly problematic, continuing:

To escape from an imagination of space as a surface is to abandon also that view of place...If space is rather simultaneity of stories-so-far, then places are collections of those stories... Places not as points or areas on maps, but as integrations of space and time as spatio-temporal events... This is an understanding of place - as open...as woven together out of ongoing stories, as a moment within power-geometries, as a particular constellation within the wider topographies of space, and as in process, as unfinished business... (Massey 2005, 130-131).

Such “unfinished business” reinforces the idea that the urban landscape can be traversed in endless narratives that tell new stories about the city and its futures. The mobile imagination, put into practice through such a walking-mapping-narrating method, has the potential to mine the spatio-temporal dimension of places and generate genuine alternatives to current realities.

## NOTES

1. These proposals were generated before the Low Line which is a plan for opening the Williamsburg Bridge Trolley Terminal on the Lower East Side of New York as an underground park.
2. This said, of course, “sedentary” methods – as Urry and Sheller spell out – are pervasive in the study of landscape as discrete place – or “bounded and authentic... regions or nations as the fundamental basis of human identity and experience” (Sheller and Urry 2006, 208-209; citing Cresswell 2002, 12-15).
3. The walking practice of the *dérive* was preceded by Dada’s “excursions” and succeeded by a number of psychogeographic practices such as the Italian group, Stalker (see Careri 2002, for instance).
4. Clearly we are not the only practice that uses a kind of ambulatory ethnography when it comes to reimagining the city otherwise. Stalker, for instance, the Italian architectural collective, has long been using the walk as a medium through which to remap the sociospatial dimensions of the city (see Wiley 2010; Lang 2007). While itinerancy is not essential their approach, practitioners aligned with “Everyday Urbanism” (Chase et al, 1999/2008) additionally use grounded fieldwork to study everyday acts – that appropriate and spatialize the city in creative ways. It would thus also fit within the framework of mobility studies as defined very broadly by Sheller and Urry (2006).



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# *Epilogue*