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# Urban Hitchhiking – wandering with others

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## Abstract

This article introduces the method of Urban Hitchhiking, a reflective practice of sharing a walk with strangers. We examine Urban Hitchhiking as a way of understanding people, space and place by comparing it to other methods that tap into the meanings and complexities of contemporary cities, such as the psychography and urban ethnography. What are the differences and similarities between these practices and urban hitchhiking? What kind of questions can it answer? What role does a performative aspect play and how is it manifested in the results? We present our own accounts of Urban Hitchhiking as two artists who developed the method and a researcher who practiced it, analysing our perspectives and findings. As a result, we outline four themes that characterise Urban Hitchhiking as a method of urban exploration: spatiality, performativity, gender and hospitality. Finally, we introduce the idea of an empathetic drift as a shared act of trust that emerges as a result of this method.

KEYWORDS: drift, empathy, ethnography, *dérive*, performance, hitchhiking

## Introduction

We would like to introduce you to Urban Hitchhiking. The score that we (Tuuli Malla and Lauri Jäntti) have been following is fairly simple: take a sign that says “May I walk with you for a while?<sup>1</sup>”. Place yourself along a pedestrian route (Figure 1) Stand somewhere along that path, raise your thumb and make eye contact with people who are passing. Wait fairly passively, looking for eye contact until someone approaches you. Let the journey begin. Often the person who is giving you a lift will ask what this is about. You may answer as you like. We tend to say that this is an experiment, that we are trying out what happens when we encounter a stranger. But Urban Hitchhiking is more than a talk with a stranger. It is an embodied, situated walk and sometimes another form of transport that happens in the city space in constant interaction with the other person and

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<sup>1</sup> The sign also has a hashtag #UrbanHitchhiking to trace facebook and instagram content of people’s experiences with the project

without a pre-defined plan. More important than sharing a journey in terms of walking is the act of hospitality presented both in the offer of “May I walk with you for a while?” and in the answer “Yes”. Sometimes it leads to shopping for a thimble or discussing what it means to encounter another, sometimes to a brief walk to a bus stop or an overnight stay. It is a challenge both for the hitchhiker and for the person who accepts the invitation, an act of trust and an intervention into the regular course of urban life.



**Figure 1. Hitchhiker about to get a ride. Photo by Lauri Jäntti**

Urban Hitchhiking was developed by Tuuli Malla and Lauri Jäntti during several iterations of their artistic experiments. The third author, Anna Kholina, practiced Urban Hitchhiking within her own research after learning about the method from Malla and Jäntti. The aim of the article is to introduce the method of Urban Hitchhiking and position it in a wider array of methods that tap into the meanings and complexities of contemporary cities. We examine Urban Hitchhiking as a way of exploring the physical and the social layers of urban space. What are the differences and similarities between urban hitchhiking and other practices? What kind of questions can it answer? What role does a performative aspect play and how is it manifested in the results? Analysing our own perspectives and accounts of Urban Hitchhiking helps us answer these questions and reflect on the potential of this practice.

The article is structured in the following way: first, we discuss the Urban Hitchhiking in relation to existing methods of urban ethnography and psychogeography. Next, we provide our own accounts of Urban Hitchhiking and reflect on the role of this method in

our research and practice. Finally, we outline four themes that characterise Urban Hitchhiking as a method and introduce the idea of an empathetic drift as a situated practice of urban research.

## Background

In general, Urban Hitchhiking is a way to engage with people while moving together in space. It is based on walking as an activity that connects spatial settings and human routines in a form of a dialogue, although it is not restricted to walking and may include other forms of movement or stillness according to the course of events. In general, walking is seen a practice that produces particular relationships with the environment (Ingold, 2011; Solnit, 2000). It allows sensing and learning about spaces, discovering and transforming the city, mutually constituting bodies and landscapes and constructing meanings in human-environment relationships (Pinder 2011; Middleton, 2010). Walking is both an appropriation and an exploration, a way to connect time and space (Edensor, 2010) and a mode of experiencing place (Wunderlich, 2008).

At the same time Urban Hitchhiking is a very specific form of walking. First of all, the hitchhiker makes herself visible in the space by holding a sign and a thumb, and by making an eye-contact. Secondly, the practice takes place only if another person volunteers to take part and lead the way. Thirdly, the walk is most of the time a conversation. Finally, the route of the walk is not restricted in advance in time and space, rather, it is a form of a drift where the hitchhiker follows the directions of the participant and immerses herself in the situation. To position Urban Hitchhiking in the array of experimental methods dealing with the complexity and subjectivity of the urban realm, we will first compare it to two other practices based on walking: the psychogeographic practice of *dérive* and the go-along interviews used in urban ethnography. The following section will draw the parallels between the above mentioned methods and Urban Hitchhiking, outlining the distinctive qualities and the potential of the latter.

### Urban Hitchhiking and the *dérive*

The *dérive* or drifting is ‘a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances’ (Debord, 1958) used by The International Situationists movement to confront ‘the society of the spectacle’ (Bassett, 2004, p. 401), where commodities and consumption dominate. Despite the political and critical nature, the *dérive* is an exploratory technique that encourages playful-constructive behaviour and liberates the tendency towards play in everyday life. The *dérive* is based on the sensibility towards the changing atmospheres of the space and the urban landscape: ‘one should abandon oneself to the attractions of the terrain and the encounters one finds there’ (Debord, 1958). Known as a solo activity, the *dérive* was traditionally done in groups of two or three people who share political, aesthetic and philosophical views, awakening of consciousness (Macauley, 2000, p. 31, Wood, 2010, p. 187). Urban Hitchhiking, even though the Hitchhiker and the participant do not necessarily share common views and goals, can be seen as a distinct form of the

dérive where random encounters define the course of the walk and construct the situations that uncover the narratives and personal stories embedded into the urban realm. On a more generic level, Urban Hitchhiking presents a form of psychogeography where both the geographical environment and the emotions of the individuals are intertwined in a form of a dialogue.

This understanding of Urban Hitchhiking echoes the description of the course on psychogeography taught at Brunel University:

*“We teach them [the students] to destabilise their perception of the city so that it becomes less instrumental, less automatic and habituated so that they begin to see the cracks run through everything, those little funny places where time isn’t quite what you think it is and space isn’t quite what you think it is or places are not what you think they are, maybe even humans are not quite what you think they are habitually”*  
(Papadimitriou & Sinclair, 2017).

Urban Hitchhiking and dérive share another common feature. As a form of psychogeography, dérive helps identify contours, currents and points that discourage entry into certain zones (Debord, 1958). Urban Hitchhiking has a similar potential as it follows the daily routines of people that mingle between private and public spaces, and the hitchhiker notices this change as the journey with the stranger becomes more intimate.

On the other hand, the dynamics between the participants in a drift and during the Urban Hitchhiking are different. The drift is usually a somewhat private journey with the internal experience being in the focus of attention. Although the external world guides the drifter when using a map of Paris in Helsinki, crossing the street wherever there is a green light or when following a stranger, the drifter is immersed into a stream of sensations which forms a spectacle. The urban hitchhiker, in contrary, can’t remain an outsider to the participant who acts as a stranger, because without a meaningful dialogue the walk turns into a series of awkward moments rather than into a meaningful encounter. The focus of the hitchhiker is no longer on his own sensations, but on the other person, which brings the Urban Hitchhiking closer to an interview.

Even when the drifting is done in small groups as advocated by Debord (Wilcox, Palassio and Dovercourt, 2002, p.96), the participants of the practice usually stay in one group during most of the time to cross-check their impressions and arrive to more objective conclusions (Wood, 2010, p. 187). In Urban Hitchhiking, the participants may change, bringing their own views and experiences to the practice.

There are other differences between the two techniques. Urban Hitchhiking does not necessarily underline a critical attitude towards the hegemonic scope of modernity, although it can be used for this purpose depending on the stance and focus of the hitchhiker. Same as urban ethnographers, the Situationists preferred ghettos and slums (Bassett, 2004, p. 402), while for Hitchhiker the impact is on the quality of the encounters and openness of people rather than their attribution to a certain social class. Finally, the traditional psychogeographies are rooted in the male gaze (Bridger, 2013), while Urban Hitchhiking is (or should be) gender neutral. Even though in the following sections we will demonstrate that the practice Urban Hitchhiking renders the gender imbalances visible due to its performative aspect, the tradition of psychogeography perceives the gender bias as a norm for practicing the *dérive*.

#### Urban Hitchhiking and a go-along interview

In urban ethnography there is a long standing tradition of methods based on movement through space. According to the geographers James Evans and Phil Jones, “walking interviews generate richer data, because interviewees are prompted by meanings and connections to the surrounding environment and are less likely to try and give the ‘right’ answer” (Evans & Jones, 2011, p. 849). Walking interviews also create a natural setting for studying informants’ everyday routines, as noted by the ethnographer Margarethe Kusenbach (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 464).

Known as a go-along, a method of walking together with the interviewee shares many similarities with Urban Hitchhiking: “When conducting go-alongs, fieldworkers accompany individual informants on their ‘natural’ outings, and — through asking questions, listening and observing — actively explore their subjects’ stream of experiences and practices as they move through, and interact with, their physical and social environment.” (ibid, p. 463). However, there are several qualities that differentiate the two practices.

The first difference is the visibility of the artist or researcher who practices urban hitchhiking. With the sign and a raised thumb it is difficult to stay incognito in the urban space, and this adds an aspect of performativity into the practice. Ethnographers, on the other hand, are very rarely visible, and even prefer to leave out the jottings during the go-along interviews to blend in the setting. Secondly, the choice of the participants or the sampling principle also varies. In urban ethnography, the focus is usually on the deviants, outcast groups, and minorities (Suttles, 1976, p. 1). The sampling is usually purposeful, with informants carefully selected by the researcher. Urban Hitchhiking, on the opposite, uses the random sampling principle and welcomes the participants independently of their status or belonging to a certain group of people.

As a result, the practices captured during Urban Hitchhiking can be to a large extent mundane and habitual. While that be a problem for an ethnographer, for a hitchhiker it presents an opportunity — an ability to engage with own experiences during the practice,

rather than focusing primarily on the participant's interpretations and actions. For the person who practices urban hitchhiking, the journey becomes an adventure of unexpected encounters with people, practices and the spatial settings. The unfamiliarity of the situations that unfold in familiar settings turns Urban Hitchhiking to a form of a spectacle and a drift. The next section explores this relation by comparing it to the practices of Flâneur and *dérive*.

## Summary

The summary of this comparison leads to the following conclusion: Urban Hitchhiking borrows the features of both urban ethnography and psychogeography, but at the same time, has a potential to balance the self-centered attitude of the person doing the *dérive* and the engagement of an ethnographer in her subjects. Once this balance is achieved, Urban Hitchhiking creates a setting for exploring the complexities of a city from multiple perspectives. We will explore these perspectives in detail in the next section through our own practice of doing the Urban Hitchhikes.

## Developing and practicing Urban Hitchhiking

In 2015, Urban Hitchhiking was born out of a conversation Lauri Jäntti had with someone he bumped into by chance. There on the street they came to discuss how in hitchhiking actually getting a lift from one place to another was not in the core of the experience of getting into a stranger's car. In this very moment the chance meeting and urban space played a key role in forming the beginning. Straight away the Jäntti tried out pedestrian hitchhiking which did not lead into getting a lift in the first fifteen minutes as he was holding his thumb up by the entrance to Stockmann department store in central Helsinki. As the social element seemed to be the most significant factor in the whole process, perhaps the car could be removed and maybe there was no need to go a long way or to decide a direction. Next summer he continued the experimentation with Sissi Korhonen who is an experienced hitchhiker. Tuuli Malla also tried adding a sign to include a direction. Her signs said "towards the sea" and "I would like to fall in love". Physical direction was too restrictive, although Malla ended up getting a lift and walking with people who had a different direction, whereas Jäntti was in process of getting a date arranged to him by passers-by. Korhonen and Jäntti held a hitchhiking jam where people were invited to make their own signs and try to hitchhike with them. Eventually the sign took the form of an open invitation "May I walk with you for a while?". After that, various hitchhiking experiences and workshops took place in cities including St Petersburg, Arkhangelsk, Lappeenranta, Tartu and Prague.

In the summer of 2016 the Tuuli Malla was drifting with the help of strangers in Eyrarbakki, Iceland (Saga residency). *I am just a visitor* — Eyrarbakki was a during which where she met people in a village as a visiting stranger. She was interested in the role of the visitor, how does one approach a stranger, how does hospitality work both ways - so that the visiting artist is not just taking but also being a host in some way. Discussion seemed to be a way of showing hospitality. Asking: “Where am I?” ... “Do you have a favourite memory from here?” ... talking, drinking coffee, offering Moomin biscuits because the Moomins never lock their door at night and they always welcome guests. In the end she asked: “Who I should meet next?” and got pointed at a direction and told who she was going to meet. The project was a combination of lone walking into a direction that was given from the outside and meetings in the places where she got sent to. For the Malla the most intriguing part of the journey were moments when she was struggling to find the way to a place she was pointed to go. Once she had to look back to find from which angle the window that she got the directions from was visible and orientated herself based on that sightline. The experience of getting lost on a journey that from the starting point looked so simple describes the role of a visitor relying on help of others with a sense of orientation that shifts between familiar and unfamiliar.

After these various events Malla and Jäntti decided to collaborate in taking a deeper dive into Urban Hitchhiking as an extended period of walking with strangers starting in Helsinki in June, leading up to an exhibition in HAM-kulma gallery (2017).

## Experiences

One of the questions was if this would be a way of engaging with the conversation about social bubbles – how people tend to interact with those who are in a similar socio-economic situation. The ease in situations that one would have expected to be outside of one's comfort zone became one of the most significant experiences for Malla. In hindsight these situations often seemed strange when told to others but in the reality of hitchhiking they had not seemed strange at all. Queueing for free food together with a stranger in what is colloquially known as “the bread queue”, officially Veikko and Lahja Hursti's Charitable Association, which is often portrayed as a site of poverty (*Boiling Point*, 2017). Queueing with a person who had agreed to walk together was a part of the journey, a transition from the familiar streets into the place where one never thought of going before, being invited into another social realm which in the end was surprisingly approachable. This experience of queueing around the block with someone one had never met before among other journeys changed Malla's perception of the boundaries of the city, which places are open for entering but also the social sense of the city. Extensive Urban Hitchhiking acted as a social restructuring and made interactions with strangers a norm more than an exception (Figure 2).





**Figure 2. Photographs from hitchhiker's visits to domestic spaces: allotment and home. Photos by Lauri Jäntti**

What became most significant for Malla in the project were sudden moments of opening to individual people hearing a story that describes the life of that person. The most memorable moments were made out of fragility in stories when the tragedy and beauty of a life was shared. Already before starting Urban Hitchhiking, Malla had expected that there is a universal need for sharing these stories with others, even with strangers. Urban

Hitchhiking gives an opportunity for doing so by creating a space for meeting someone in the middle of everyday and the hitchhiker is offering to listen. Despite having had the expectation in advance, experiencing the depth of some of the shared journeys was significant. These experiences were documented in a form of a diary (Figure 3).

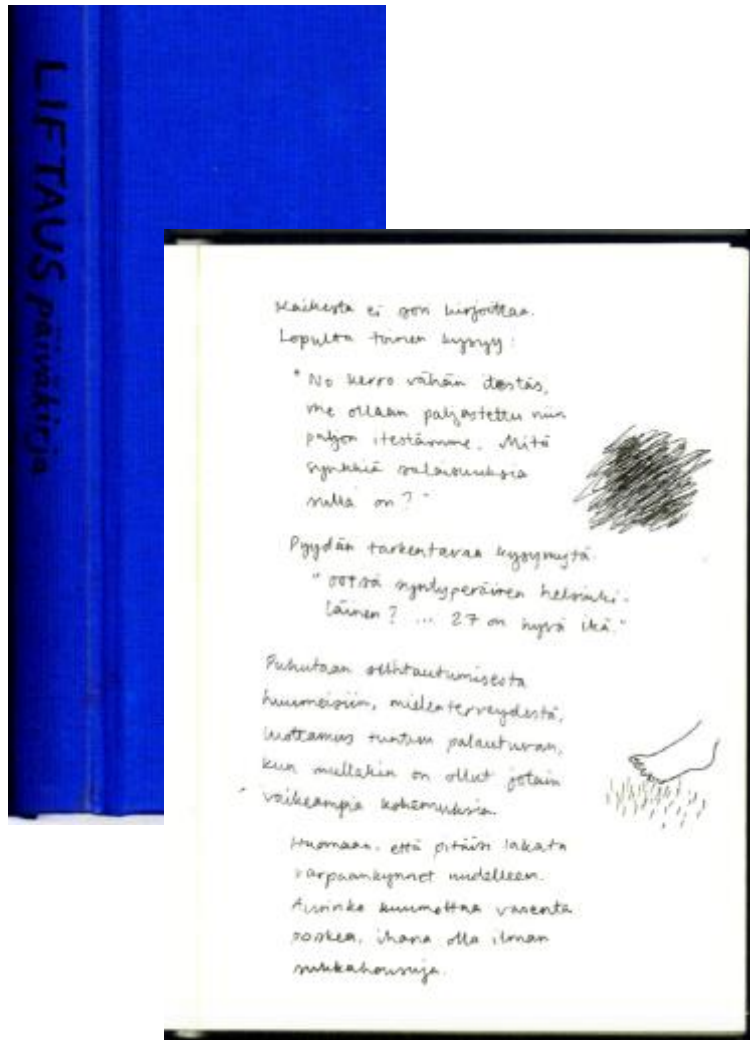


Figure 3. Tuuli Malla's hitchhiking diary

Anna Kholina started practicing Urban Hitchhiking in Spring 2017 to learn more about the area of the University campus from the perspective of the students. The area attracted interest because of its dualistic character. On one hand, it is an object of cultural heritage and a famous architectural site. On the other hand, due to its planning with separate zones

for living, studying and shopping, it lacks public life and is heavily underused in the evenings. Kholina wanted to understand how the public space was organised in the area and how the students living and working on campus related to it. One of her accounts illustrate the process of discovering hidden boundaries of the space:

*“I was standing on one of the small pedestrian roads some fifty meters away from the University building when a student agreed to give me a ride. As we talked, I learned that she was on her way home to the student village and was overall very satisfied about the campus space. She particularly stressed the presence of nature and an ability to be away from other people as positive qualities. It resonated with the nature of her studies: as an engineer, she preferred concentration and solitude to the buzz and interaction. I was surprised and left her on the edge of the student village, not far from the study area. But when I tried to find the next ride, I encountered a problem. Nobody was making eye contact with me and people were avoiding me to the extent of crossing the street in the opposite direction as soon as they saw a person holding a sign. Even when a dozen of people exited a bus just in front of me, none of them even looked my way. I felt like an intruder who breaks some laws or unspoken rules. It was then that I realised that I found the border between the public and the private space.”*

A person who tried Urban Hitchhiking in the US faced with extreme reactions that differed significantly from other experiences (in Helsinki, Arkangel, Lappeenranta, St Petersburg etc). She was told hitchhiking is dangerous and that she might get killed. Although she was not going to step into any vehicles, the association with the word ‘hitchhiking’ was so strong in people's minds that they could not help but warning her of the worst case scenarios. In a smaller scale this has come up a few times of people saying “I could be a mass murderer” or something like this and often a part of the conversation is about how many of us have been told already as children not to talk to strangers. Sometimes (mainly in Helsinki) people say they are making an effort to encounter strangers, to start a conversation with someone they do not know as a personal challenge.

## Thematic potential of Urban Hitchhiking

Although there is a lot of divergence in how we practiced Urban Hitchhiking, there seem to be recurrent themes that emerge from our experiences. Here we would like to elaborate four of them and reflect on the role of this tool in research and art practice.

### Spatiality

In line with the spatial turn in Ethnography (Emmerson, 2001), Urban Hitchhiking presents an attempt to connect the physical and the social layer of the space by means of embodied practice of walking together with a stranger. It allows mapping the experiences of both the hitchhiker and the participant in relation to the physical space and analyse the rhythms, meanings and practices that contribute to place-making processes. Urban Hitchhiking brings the psychogeographic dimension into the ethnographic practice. It is possible to be engaged with others, but still be aware of the invisible boundaries which divide the urban fabric.

### Performativity

The most clear factor of performativity comes in the moment of standing still and waiting with a sign and a thumb. There are reactions from the people passing by which influence the hitchhiker. Some look down and try to avoid the situation but they are still in dialogue with the hitchhiker. The performativity of walking together is subtle, more an attitude than a role, which is based on following, listening and staying in the moment with the person (or people) one is sharing a journey with. This attitude creates a space for the other to open up but there are many different levels of attention depending on the encounter - some journeys are less interesting than others. There is a sense of responsibility for the shared journey as someone took the offer that the hitchhiker offered.

Leading workshops made us realise how the small embodied skills are key to the hitchhiker's trip. There is no wrong or right as such but the very fact of becoming visible through hitchhiking requires being able to have patience in the moment of waiting and allowing people to look. The experience of hitchhiking can be uncomfortable or pleasurable depending on one's own mood and expectations as well as the external impulses, which are partly in response to the inner mood shining through but also related to the locality - Töölö neighbourhood is different to Kallio, a square is different to a street.

### Gender

In terms of unintended performativity of gender, Urban Hitchhiking made Malla consider the role of an open offer for encounter in association with seen as a female body. Prior to Urban Hitchhiking Malla had various experiences of drifting without thinking of the male gaze. With Urban Hitchhiking the comments of people who were approaching her created a friction between the attempt of neutrality as a follower and repeated comments that were meant as compliments started to make the point of a young female body made visible and offering an invitation for being encountered. The types of comments were nothing new but the position of being open for following impulses made it challenging to

keep up boundaries that would normally be in place. As someone asked Malla to go home with her, refusing the offer to walk together only part of the journey as someone else asked: “Are you selling yourself too?” When she was standing on Vaasankatu she thought of the early days of the flaneurs, later reading that:

*“The prostitute was the quintessential female figure of the urban scene . . . for men as well as women, the prostitute was a central spectacle in a set of urban encounters and fantasies”*  
(Walkowitz, 1992).

Someone was warning her of possible rapists and a journalist commented he was surprised she did not face much sexual harassment. For Malla the encounter-led drift revealed the role of a female body in the chance journeys in a way that made her revisit the gendered aspect of the psychogeographical tradition. In fact she saw herself as part of the lineage of psychogeographers and only came to enquire the tradition more deeply after comments she was exposed to during Urban Hitchhiking. The inner experience of Malla’s performance of a gender neutral body, in other words not considering one’s position through gender binaries (Butler, 1999) was in conflict with the external comments on her body. Despite the non-binary experience, it has been difficult to find vocabulary for describing the issues in this paper.

The male dominant positions in psychogeography run deep. Ralph Rumney, one of the former situationists who has spoken about the gender views of the group described the International Situationists as “extraordinarily antifeminist in its practice” (Rumney in Bridger, 2013, p. 3). This included assigning women to mainly cook and type. The group did not properly accredit its female members and especially the role of Michèle Bernstein who is currently a literary critic has gone unacknowledged (Bridger, 2013). Also current psychogeographers, such as Sinclair, have been critiqued for the lack of engagement with enquiring his own role in experiencing places from a gendered aspect of subjectivity (Bridger, 2013). Although gender is the most prominent topic of subjectivity in this article, identities are never only gendered but also shaped by race, class and ethnicity, which create particular forms of oppression (Butler, 1999).

#### Hospitality of walking together

Urban Hitchhiking can be seen as a social or an empathetic drift where the hitchhiker relies on a chance encounter to follow a stranger who determines the direction. Urban Hitchhiking is consensual following and includes a possibility for at least a short-term equilibrium: although the hitchhiker is mainly following the person who stops for them,

the result is usually walking together side by side and sometimes negotiating the direction together. Some of the most well-known pieces of performance art based on following strangers are Vito Acconci's *Following Piece* (1969) and Sophie Calle's *Suite Vénitienne* (Jeffries, 2009), both based on a secretive task that carries its poetry in a one-way relationship that contains a risk of the “stalker” being discovered. In *#TAKEMEANYWHERE* by LaBeouf, Rönkkö and Turner (Coldwell, 2016) the stalker situation has been reversed as the artists relied on someone to find them based on their coordinates posted online and take them anywhere from there.

Urban Hitchhiking emphasises the encounter – people who meet due to an invitation proposed using a sign and body language. The hitchhiker is on a drift with points of stillness and waiting, and time spent with the person (or several people) who picks up the hitchhiker is a part of the journey. For the hitchhiker it is one of many encounters, each different but probably for the person giving a lift the experience is a one-off. Sometimes this leads to a situation where the hitchhiker ends up in parallel situations but our sense was that it was better not to tell the person giving the lift about the parallel experiences: Malla did not say she found it an interesting coincidence that she was eating Thai food again with a man in his thirties, she ordered another papaya salad. There is a navigation between acknowledging that there are others along the way and at the same time focusing on each encounter as something specific and possibly holding a veil of uniqueness. This was not a definitive choice but an intuitive response to the situations.

The person giving the lift is often on their way somewhere, on a pre-decided route so that the two different journeys meet: one is waiting to be taken anywhere, towards an unknown direction and the other is already on their way, taking someone along for their walk or sometimes a ride in public transport or by car. An everyday route may remain the same but something is changed through the presence of the hitchhiker willing to follow without a request of the direction. In comparison to following someone in secret, often the question “Why are you doing this?” is asked and the everyday journey and questions of encounters meet. Occasionally there was a sense of awkwardness in exposing oneself and admitting that this is what we are doing – just seeing what happens next. In addition to this, during the hitchhiking period in June 2017 we gave the people we walked with also a card with details of an exhibition (Jäntti, Malla, 2017), which was being made out of experiences, photographs and audio recording of the walks. Most people journeying with us were happy to be in the documentation.

Looking at projects of walking with strangers: The People Walker of LA (Carroll, 2016), Rebecca Cade's performance project *Walking Holding* (2011, 2015) and for example Kio Shark's TED talk on the importance of talking to strangers (2016), it seems there is an urgent need for connecting with each other. In our experience of Urban Hitchhiking, walking together in public space is both intimate and provides ease: there is a shared journey and pace as well as being seen together while simultaneously being able to talk about things around us and not being face to face. As the setting changes, the social dynamics also shift, especially when entering a home.

## Conclusion

This article reviewed the method of Urban Hitchhiking as a balancing act between the self-centered practices of psychogeography and the socially-oriented traditions of ethnography. The communication between the two journeys of drift and purposeful walking provides a crossroad between two ways of walking and makes the hitchhiker's perspective visible to the other person. Urban Hitchhiking lies between art and research, between performance art and life. The four themes that characterise it, spatiality, performativity, gender and hospitality, demonstrate that this method can produce a variety of outputs depending on the perspective of the hitchhiker, and these outputs are always a combination of impulses from the urban space and the other person.

Building on the existing methods based on walking in the city, Urban Hitchhiking catalyses the movement, encounter and dialogue into an embodied performance that highlights the physical and social complexities of contemporary cities. Its particular strength lies in the notion of hospitality, that we characterise in this article as an empathetic drift, a process of walking with a stranger when the hitchhiker is exposing herself to the outside world, while the participant opens up a part of her life in response. This short mutual act of trust or hospitality is seems almost like a remedy to the alienation and isolation of contemporary urban dwellers. "May I walk with you for a while?"

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