

# Walk & Talk Manual

Walk&Talk is an engaging and participatory format that encourages dialogue when walking. Artists, creatives and participants from other fields who practice Walk&Talk generate ideas and exchange knowledge across disciplines. Walk&Talk is valued for brainstorming, developing projects and relationships, and educational workshops. Through adjusted iterations, Walk&Talk offers multiple outcomes.

This manual has grown out of aspects and anecdotes of select Walk&Talk. While we believe each Walk&Talk is distinct from others, the ideas, lists, and illustrations used here form a rough guide adaptable to future Walk&Talk. The manual is organised into 10 Sections; each presents questions on a Walk&Talk aspect. The Sections are designed and interlinked to be read individually or in any order.



## Location

### Where to begin and end Walk&Talk?

We start at a place of interest easy for participants to find and access to minimise unnecessary obstacles and delays. We plan to complete our Walk&Talk at a place of interest ideally where we may also assemble over food and drink. We consider the duration and distance to public transport for start and end places (see DURATION and PARTICIPANTS).

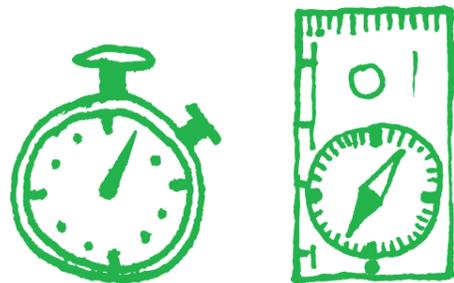
### Should the beginning and end place have a significant meaning?

We consider how the context of a Walk&Talk start or end place relates to the topic contained in Walk&Talk's Invitation (see TOPIC and INVITATION). While it is unnecessary for these locations to have a context overtly connected to Walk&Talk's theme, we look at places' contemporary and historic context, and design through the lens of the Walk&Talk topic.

### Does the Walk&Talk start inside or outside?

We consider that Walk&Talk itself starts outside, and ideally in a public place. We sometimes meet inside to introduce Walk&Talk and participants. We meet inside when Walk&Talk is part of a series of inside events, begins at our collaboration hub, ACE&LION and if the weather is poor. If the weather is likely to be a challenging condition, and we are meeting outside, we select a sheltered meeting place.

*Some Walk&Talk start places:* Statue, Museum, Train station



## Duration

### How long should the Walk&Talk be?

Walk&Talk is usually around 3± hours, but it may be another duration. The right duration promotes better dialogue on the topic (see TOPIC). It is useful to find a length, and pace, that both creates a challenge and accounts for ability. We consider participants' ages and fitness to assess the ability and constraints of who we expect to go. A quick Walk&Talk may be up to an hour long. An endurance Walk&Talk may take over 6 hours.

### When to begin and end our Walk&Talk?

We like to start between late-morning and midday depending on the duration. We like to finish between mid-afternoon and dinner. We prefer to start after and end before meal times rather than interrupt rhythm for a seated meal. The right duration without stop can help

facilitate a state of heightened motivation, called flow. We set a meeting time 15 minutes before we begin Walk&Talk.

### What takes precedence in planning: time or distance?

We set a time period rather than distance as Walk&Talk is more about depth of ideas and exchange than length of physical terrain covered (see INTRODUCTION). Planning around time also minimises some potential participant cancellation as some participants prefer to think in terms of their time committed than distance walked. We plan the end-place around the length of time set and expected pace, rather than accelerate to arrive somewhere on time.

### Varying the plan:

We stop at a place before reaching our intended end-place where the pace and course fills the time and many in the group want to, such as in cold wet weather, when pausing along Walk&Talk fills time planned.

### On talking, walking and time:

We believe discussion involves transferring existing information and dialogue involves exchanging ideas with the potential for something new. New ideas often come up in Walk&Talk while through talking across disciplines in a free format and open space, in the context of the topic (see TOPIC). It takes time, particularly when participants meet for the first time, to move from discussion to dialogue. During this time, the rhythm and energy of Walk&Talk distances other concerns and can help generate creative ideas.

### Suggestions:

- Be strict with timing: set a meeting time 15 minutes before start-time to allow variation in arrival times and time to introduce one another.
- Pace the Walk&Talk around the group (see PARTICIPANTS).
- Take time including for stopping, looking, meeting people along the way and refreshments.
- If a person wants to join midway, appoint someone to liaise with them about where (see PARTICIPANTS).
- Be quick in group transitions and avoid lengthy disruptions. When someone leaves early, it can interrupt others' flow in Walk&Talk.



## Topic

### Should we set a topic for the Walk&Talk and why?

Yes, set the topic to be a point of departure in conversation. It is important we have a shared focus before we begin Walk&Talk, or any collaboration.

### What could the topic of Walk&Talk be?

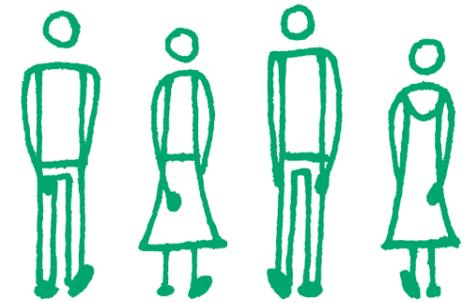
Topics are chosen around our areas of interest. They reflect our practice and, sometimes, contemporary events. We come up with a point of interest—as the topic—as a departure point to take further.

### Previous topics:

*From Science to Culture, Sustainability, Non-violence*

### Do we need to stick to the topic throughout Walk&Talk?

No, topics are starting points, and, in a sense, placeholders. Throughout the Walk&Talk our conversations naturally evolve off-topic, often thereby giving the topic a relationship with other points of interest. Similarly, we do not need to keep to a geographical route (see MAPS).



## Participants

### Who do we invite?

We invite people who have interesting points of view, a broad knowledge base and, sometimes, experience the topic relates to (see TOPIC). These include family, friends, colleagues, peers, and others.

### How many people should we Walk&Talk with?

We don't limit the number of people that we Walk&Talk with, but from experience we believe Walk&Talk works well with 7 to 12 people. This number is large enough for several overlapping conversations among people from various disciplines with different perspectives. Groups larger than this are harder to navigate and engage with everyone in a 3-hour Walk&Talk. Groups smaller than 7 can limit the possibilities Walk&Talk offers particularly for cross-disciplinary knowledge exchange and idea development.

### Do we need Walk&Talk facilitators?

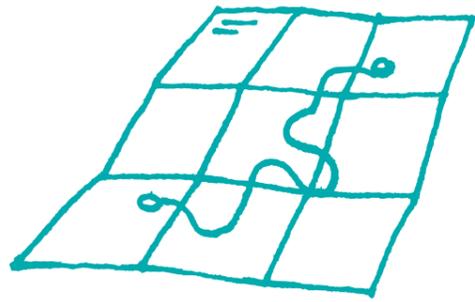
Yes, it is good practice to appoint facilitators to introduce the topic, initiate participant introductions, liaise with late-comers (see DURATION), and help guide the group through some urban or rural areas. The facilitator(s) can also be the organiser(s) of the Walk&Talk, but this is not necessary.



## Invitation

### Should we send an invitation?

Yes, we invite people to go on Walk&Talk by e-mail and in person. We select limited information that sets the basis and context for each Walk&Talk. We include the title, time and date, meeting place, meeting time, start time, end time (see DURATION), our contact details to reply to and, sometimes, an explanatory sentence or two (see TOPIC).



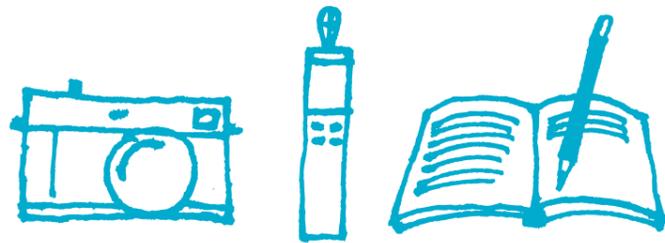
## Maps

### Do you use maps?

We have prepared maps with the start and end points. Some of our early Walk&Talks included several interim points of interest. We now research what these might be and prefer the group to decide ahead of and/or during the Walk&Talk when and where to pause or accelerate. We sometimes hand out a printed map at meeting time. This partly depends on how well participants and we know the area. We have noticed that while mobile phone map applications are useful for recording routes and joining midway, it is easy to miss out on Walk&Talk while using a mobile phone, including for mapping.

### How important are maps on the Walk&Talk?

If we know the area where we do a Walk&Talk maps are not necessary, however, if we don't know the area it is useful to consult a map (see LOCATION). Another alternative is also to invite (a) participant(s) with local knowledge and appoint them to facilitate the direction (see PARTICIPANTS).



## Tools

### What do we need on a Walk&Talk?

It is good practice that the walk is somehow recorded. We usually bring a set of documentation tools (i.e. video and/or stills camera, audio recorders, notebook or sketchbook for talking points, memorabilia, and noting problems). A very important aspect of the Walk&Talk are comfortable clothing and footwear appropriate for weather conditions. We encourage people to carry some refreshments to prevent interrupting the flow.

### What is best practice to use documentation tools?

We encourage people to document the activities, topics discussed (see TOPIC), photographing or filming interesting moments along the way of the Walk&Talk. When using digital recording tools such as cameras and audio devices, ask the participants whether or not they object being filmed, recorded or photographed. It is good practice and also shows respect for the participants. Should participants object being recorded exclude them from the documentation while walking or afterwards.

### Anecdotes about audio and video recording:

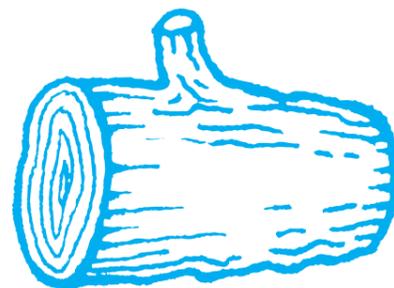
- Some people, including us, act and talk differently on Walk&Talk when audio or video are recorded. Conversations can feel guarded, or potted, instead of free.
- An alternate approach to record what is said is to write key words during Walk&Talk in a sketchbook and write a longer subjective narrative prompted by these memory aids after Walk&Talk.
- It is difficult to Walk&Talk and record in several medium simultaneously. It is difficult to make video which involves several focused senses and Walk&Talk which involves watching where we walk, thinking, listening, talking, and sometimes taking photos and notes. If Walk&Talk is to be video recorded, consider having this done by someone not also facilitating Walk&Talk.

### Does the Walk&Talk need documenting at all?

No, the Walk&Talk does not need documenting. However, we feel that capturing is useful for the archive afterwards (see AFTER) either for personal use or dissemination among group. Some people consider Walk&Talk part of their artistic practice and/or research and capture aspects of the Walk&Talk for use presenting that later.

### Thoughts

- Walk&Talk is the event. For us, photographs capture Walk&Talk. They are evidence to aid memory and contribute to Walk&Talk stories, research, presentation and future work.
- It is preferable to carry a drink and snack rather than interrupt Walk&Talk's momentum or flow.
- Considering what we need for a Walk&Talk, in relation to what we have in our daily lives, invites reflection about consumption, waste, and how our values align with our work and lifestyle.



## Log

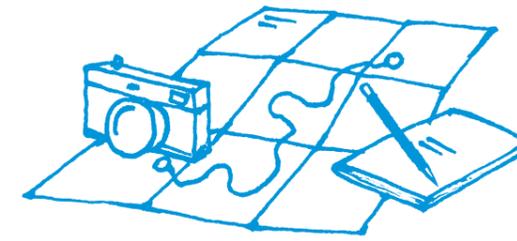
### Should we make a record of Walk&Talk?

We keep a Walk&Talk log. We use this for research, to add material to our other projects, and to reflect on when planning future Walk&Talk (see TOOLS). We log these items before, during, and after Walk&Talk with the following information:

*Before:* meeting point, planned starting time and place, planned end time and place, conditions, motivations

*During:* ideas and thoughts, conversation points, memorabilia, places of interest, people

*After:* reflections, texts, places, links to related people, places, talking points, other potential directions and outcomes



## After

### Should we meet afterwards?

As collaborators organising Walk&Talk, we meet within a few days of Walk&Talk to debrief on what went well, challenges, and points of interest. This enables us to pursue things further, understand problems, discuss critical points and share reflections. The debrief process leads to planned changes in future Walk&Talk iterations and is part of action research methodology.

### How can we maintain contact with participants about Walk&Talk?

We gather Walk&Talk participants' contact details and send a note thanking participants and inviting them to share photographs and other files, on-line. These files and projects that use them can take Walk&Talk into other spaces and medium, such as the Internet (through blogging and websites), presentations, and other projects or exhibitions. Walk&Talk participants can maintain contact and build relationships through these.

### What do we do with materials from Walk&Talk?

We archive Walk&Talk material. Archiving photos, drawings, writing, maps and other evidence and impressions from Walk&Talk creates organised accessible material for future use. Walk&Talk archiving involves immediate impressions in relation to what we anticipate we may use later. It also involves placing a structure and order around practice that is partly improvisational. We organise Walk&Talk *horizontally*, think and act during Walk&Talk *laterally*, and organise archives of Walk&Talk *vertically* and reflexively.

*Note:* We request participants' photographs include their name in the file name and agreement these may be openly used including for organisers and participants' other work and research, with acknowledgement of Walk&Talk and participants who authored the photograph's name.



## Endnotes

### Are there other thoughts outside these Sections?

Here are a select few. We consider the Walk&Talk's essence. It is an experimental, self-titled format. It can be empowering, a creative generator, a collective action. It can be improvisational; it can be mind-opening. It embodies things we value, such as time and how we allocate it: taking time to slow down, to share ideas, to create projects with multiple perspectives. We believe forward planning, a semi-structured approach on the day and critical reflection after support Walk&Talk's essence. Other thoughts outside the scope of

this manual are archived in our sketchbooks, logs, presentations, and narrative writing (see LOG).

### Does Walk&Talk change things?

Walk&Talk can be part of or lead to changes in outlook, practice and relationships with friends and colleagues. We see things from a different perspective on Walk&Talk than walking to the shop, work, or home or talking at the studio or project space. Questions and dialogue arise in Walk&Talk differently than in other situations. We face these together moving and looking forwards, not stationary opposite one another. How does our landscape look? What are the people we pass looking at and on their way to do? What are we looking at, thinking, saying, and going to do?

### Does Walk&Talk affect us?

Walking is linear. But the line curves. Talking is lateral, structured, prepared, improvised and practiced in other forms. Walk&Talk is rhizomatic and singular—meaning that lines of conversations and walking overlap and interconnect with each other in one format. Walking and talking, practised together as Walk&Talk, changes where, and to a degree our understanding of who we and others are. In this way Walk&Talk affects how we work with others and our purpose.

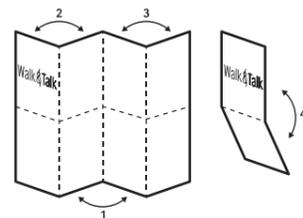
### On manuals:

Many manuals objectively direct information from writers who are not their products, creators, without their authors' names or perspective. They instruct users. This manual is a co-authored artists' publication. We acknowledge and appreciate contributions from others on Walk&Talk and that the name is similar to the media term.

### Print and fold

Print this manual on A3 paper if available. Alternatively you can print it on A4. When printing on A3 choose "none" for scaling, when printing on A4 choose "fit to page."

1. Fold paper in half with top left corner inwards.
2. & 3. Fold paper on the long sides backwards to create a zigzag.
4. Fold the zigzagged paper with bottom corners upwards.



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### Who

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