

Sara Morawetz

Sydney, Australia

www.saramorawetz.com



From our births we are creatures of movement, compelled by an intuitive desire to experience, to travel. Our first steps instigate a life lived in motion, motion that will shape the shell of our vision. The world is a decidedly different place when viewed at pace, our periphery absorbs and our parameters alter as reality succumbs to the unknown blur. We detach from the recognisable and accept the sight of objects not as they are but as they appear. And then we slip; oscillating within time and space at an exponential rate. Speed, 'the mechanical soul of modernity'¹ has created a perceptual shift, as the relevance and revelation that can be found within the comfort of ones own stride elapses into obscurity.

The expeditious rate at which we travel moves in disjunction with our body's internal mechanisms - a pulse, a canter - that omits the possibility of interacting with the world that we inhabit. So what is it then to stop - slow - retreat from speed?

The act of walking has become anachronistic. Our sensory instincts, inured to ac-



celeration, have lost the ability to read the environment from within our own measure. To steady oneself through walking is to regain a form of sight almost lost; the discovery of simplistic beauty in absence of speed and reverence to ones own body that exists within the stride. To slow down forces a recognition that the pace we maintain inevitably blinds us from the transcendental and ethereal that exists in the everyday.

My time in Montello was framed by a desire to consider the act of walking as a mode of performative practice - to invest in a physical, temporal and conceptual experience that would respond to site, sense and self.

I was immediately struck by the beauty of the landscape and humbled by its expanse. In my walks, I discovered an emptiness and an amplitude – hidden pathways and an internal pace that required me to remain at once observing and observant of the natural realm. My solitude illuminated the world around and a world within - infusing each action with stillness, silence, surface and sky. *Time slowed and I slowed with it* and the trace of this tempering has lasted long after I left the desert behind.

Walks for Richard, 2017 - Documentation of action

Fifty years ago artist Richard Long produced his photographic work *A Line Made by Walking*, documenting a physical yet ephemeral intervention with the landscape. In homage to this central figure of conceptual art and walking as performative practice, I staged a series of *Walks for Richard* during my Montello residency, illustrating the unseen labor embedded within Long's historic work.

¹ McQuire, Scott. *Visions of modernity: representation, memory, time and space in the age of the camera*. London: SAGE Publications, 1998, 184