

Walk on borders

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The ground is filled with borders and lines, most of them caused by humans.

Follow a border, for example between a street and a lawn.

Film the border while you walk. See how it changes.

Film other borders – you can define your own idea of borders.

Borders are everywhere in life, delimiting one thing from another. Physically we perceive our skin as the border of our body, the walls are the borders of our house, and on a geographical map we can see borders between regions and nations. Some want to build walls along borders, others desire to cross them either physically or metaphorically.

In urbanized areas, we relate to an incredible amount of lines and borders. We walk on streets or pavements, paths or trails, delimited by surfaces, materials, signs. Also, outside cities, like in the residential area of Denmark where I live, we find borders everywhere, but here they often contrast with something less defined called ‘nature’.

The landscape “opens onto the dividing up and sharing out [*partage*] – of the sky and the earth, of the clouds and the oaks – that it itself is, the separation of the elements in which a creation always consists” (Nancy, 2005, p. 60). In contrast to the human creation of *Landscape* through visual perception, Nancy sees *Land* a presence with a life of its own, a “set of forces that play off one another, against one another and in one another” (Nancy, 2005, p. 56).

With the proposition 'Walk on borders' I wanted to employ an approach inspired by a/r/tographic fieldwork (Rousell, D. et al., 2018, pp. 4-7). to explore a playful way of being with Land that I connect to childhood memories. When my body was smaller, I felt close to the ground and I remember how borders of any kind could be followed by my playful steps. Becoming adult, I began to look forward while walking and thus to construct my view as Landscape. Yet when I look down, Land appears, moving with my steps, losing the idea of horizon and thus of perspective, of being in control (Illeris, 2021).

Paradoxically, by closely following borders produced by humans in order to control Land, Landscape disappears. When I point the camera downwards and following the border of the street framed by the screen, it forces me to perceive only the moving line right in front of my feet. While filming, I begin to walk backwards to gain control, letting my movement be absorbed by the line. While Landscape consists in an network of connected points to be seen from above, Land is a meshwork of entangled lines to be followed by intuition (Ingold, 2016, p. 84).

The border is not only a limit. Like a proposition it is a hybrid between potentiality and actuality (Truman & Springgay, 2016, p. 259). Borders differentiate the visual perception of the ground, securing our sense of orientation, while allowing thoughts to wander. Borders are anchors to be played with.



Figure 1 and 2: Looking downwards. Following borders. Photos: Helene Illeris



<https://vimeo.com/511190317>

Figure 3: Walk on borders 1. Film clip by Helene Illeris.



<https://vimeo.com/511191085>

Figure 4: Walk on borders 1. Film clip by Helene Illeris.

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