



TASA The Australian
Sociological Association

Movement and Internal Wandering: Combining Walking and Painting Practices to Shape our Connection to the Physical Far North Queensland Environment

Author/s: *Jacqueline Scotcher*

Affiliation/s: James Cook University

This paper explores the act of walking as a way to connect both physiologically and psychologically with one's surroundings, and how such experience may reveal creative insights into new ways of seeing the world. Engaging with our natural surrounds through mindful walking can afford slower rhythm of movement and imaginative space. This may be valuable in relation to countering the increasingly fast paced lifestyle and often-sedentary nature of many urban people.

The contemporary anthropologist, Ingold recognises that pedestrianism is more than a mode of transport, and has noted walking is 'a form of engagement integral to our perception of an environment' (Pink et al. 2010, p.3). This study employs a series of perceptive walks through the unique natural environment of Cairns and surrounding regions as a basis for art practice. Merleau-Ponty wrote that 'by lending his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings' (1993, p.123) and in line with this idea, a phenomenological approach is employed in this practice-led research. How the embodied and meditative experience of walking can be conveyed in terms of paint and enrich understandings of self and the landscape are investigated. Walking art practices within a global context have been developed with particular reference to the region of Far North Queensland.