Title: *Child led tours of Brisbane’s Fortitude Valley as public pedagogy*

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Abstract:
Contemporary social policy and practices pertaining to children have seen a trend towards increasing surveillance under the premise of child protection. Growing from the awareness of this social trend and the limitations imposed on children’s demonstration of active citizenship in public spaces, the arts project Walking Neighbourhood: Hosted by children was developed by artists from the community cultural development organisation Contact Inc. The project operated in the urban public space of Brisbane’s Fortitude Valley (a place known for being child-unfriendly) in order to problematise and expose issues pertaining to child safety and active citizenship by engaging with children as collaborators and facilitators in the production of live art. Amongst the outcomes of the Walking Neighbourhood were child-provoked urban geographies and demonstrations of active citizenship mediated by walking as an arts experience. Drawing from the findings of a research project that accompanied the Walking Neighbourhood this paper will explore the nature of the child-led tours as public pedagogy, and the dynamics of inter-generational interaction between adults and children as sites of civic learning.

Keywords: public pedagogy, children’s citizenship, walking as a method
Recent times have seen an increased public concern for child safety that overrides and limits children’s participation in the public sphere. In western societies, children are seen to belong to the ‘‘private’ worlds of play, domesticity and school’ (Roche, 1999, p. 479), so that ‘seeing a child alone on the street makes you look twice and check for a shepherding adult’ (Cosic, 2012, p. 28). Parents are supervising their children much more than ever before (Coulson, 2012), with ‘helicopter parenting’ (Cline & Fay, 1990) and ‘bubble wrapping’ (Malone, 2007) being applied as descriptors of these modes of supervisory parenting. Such behaviours are driven by a climate of fear, provoked by grand narratives (fuelled largely by the media) that incite fear of abduction and murder by strangers, global terrorism and manifold other dangers that confront the sanctity of childhood. In the context of these grand narratives of fear, it is now commonplace for children to be chauffeured around their neighbourhoods (even for short distances) for fear of harm or violence befalling children who are left unattended. This trend persists even though evidence demonstrates that Australian suburbs are much safer for children than they were three decades ago (Gleeson, 2006). Children on their own are viewed as in need of protection, with the recent cases of parents being fined in Brisbane, Australia for leaving their upper primary aged children in a car whilst they shopped for less than 10 minutes highlighting the sensitivity this issue carries in the public consciousness (see Bita, 2012; Scott, 2012). This is not just the case in Australia; Mayall (2000) notes that children are regarded as adult responsibilities in public places in the UK, which further serves to solidify adult views that children are socially incompetent, hence requiring diligent chaperoning. For many children currently growing up in the Western world, the freedom to explore the urban environment and find excitement within it is rarely available (Woolley, 2006).

Since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by most nations, many have introduced policies that address the protection and provision categories, with protection clearly taking precedence over child participation rights. For example, in Australia each state has established a Commission for Children and Young People, however the main emphasis of the work of each commission is to improve the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people (that is, through the maintenance of protection rights), with a considerable proportion of their business consumed with employment screening of those who work with children. Participation rights defined in the UNCRC
are considered aspirational and not yet fully realised (Alderson, 2008a, 2008b). According to Lansdown (1994), a reason for this is that the notion of children’s rights to participation requires a significant shift in the recognition of children as participants in society, which may be viewed as a threat to traditional boundaries between adults and children. This is linked, as Lansdown explained, to children not possessing civil status and their limited access to civic institutions to ensure that their interests are acknowledged.

There are also those who outwardly endorse adult and child demarcated social spaces, such as American restaurateur Mike Vuick who recently banned diners with children under the age of six within his restaurant. Reportedly, Vuick has experienced a 20 per cent increase in customers and approximately 1800 emails of support for this move (Souter, 2012). Based on this account, it would seem that many adults prefer the status quo of adult only spaces with children confined to home and school. Instances such as this highlight socially imposed demarcations of ‘adult space’ and ‘child space’ and underpin generational politics of how space is used and who is welcome within it.

Yet exposure to measured risks and challenges at a neighbourhood level for children can provide civic learning through the utilisation of problem solving skills and the development of a critical consciousness that enables more streetwise behaviours and confident, active participation in public environments (Chawla & Heft, 2002; Hart, 1997). How then do children learn to be competent and capable active citizens in the public sphere, when their access is so limited and controlled? Response to this dilemma has seen the development of a relatively new field exploring young children’s active citizenship, attracting considerable theorising and some empirical studies (though most are with children 9 years and older) (Phillips, 2010). There are also examples of adults who consult with children on issues relevant to young people’s lives, with these purposeful acts supporting notions of young children as active citizens. Two Australian examples include the ACT Children’s Plan 2004–2014 (Australian Capital Territory Government, 2004; Saballa, MacNaughton, & Smith, 2008) and the City of Port Phillip Municipal Early Years Plan 2005–2008 (MacNaughton & Smith, 2008;
Smale, 2009) both of which preface children’s participation in public contexts and the capacities young people have to conceptualise and enact a public identity. Yet, apart from these examples opportunities for children’s practice of active citizenship seems to have been limited to small pockets, as previously highlighted (Phillips, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b). In previous studies by Phillips (2010, 2011a) that examined the active citizenship practices that a class of 5–6 years olds sought to initiate in response to social justice stories, it was identified that adult discursive constructions of children and citizenship (such as the child as *innocent* and child as *developing*) formed barriers or limitations for the scope of children’s practice of citizenship (Phillips, 2010). Yet when space was permitted for young children’s active citizenship, young children acted politically by initiating social actions and through these actions demonstrated complex citizenship qualities (Phillips, 2011a, 2011b). The study recommended that further ideas and possibilities emerge for young children’s active citizenship through young children and adults continuing to explore and experiment with ‘political coexistence’ (Phillips, 2011b). It is via close examination of what can be actualised when children and adults collaborate as citizens that contributes to understandings of the *real* possibilities of what children’s citizenship participation might lead to.

**WALKING AS AN ARTS PRACTICE AND A RESEARCH METHOD**

*Walking Neighbourhood hosted by children* was initially conceptualised by Lenine Bourke (Artistic Director, *Contact Inc.*) and Darren O’Donnell (Artistic Director of Toronto based arts collective *Mammalian Diving Reflex*) in response to the concerns highlighted above for real opportunities for children’s participation in the public sphere. In late 2010 a research agenda for exploring child actualisation, the role of urban space as public pedagogue and inter-generational collaboration was included into the thinking around the project by Louise Phillips, and later Andrew Hickey; the authors of this paper and university-based researchers.

The intent of the *Walking Neighbourhood* was to provoke social change to counter the metanarrative of risk adverse childhood(s) and to cultivate civic learning for both children and adults through co-negotiation of public spaces. This involved, in the first instance, a group of young-people, aged between 8 and 12 years, actively exploring the urban space of Brisbane’s Fortitude Valley, and from the experiences gained in these group
explorations, developing individually curated walks for participant adults. These explorations of ‘the Valley’ were orchestrated via arts worker led workshops across a series of eight 2-hour sessions, designed for the children to identify something of interest that would form the basis of a curated walk to a destination of their choice that they would share with an audience. The final public performances of the curated walks occurred over 2 days in August 2012 (see http://contact.org.au/projects/the-walking-neighbourhood/ walking-neighbourhood-brisbane).

Over time the arts practice and research method of walking was selected for its potential for child direction; welcoming children’s participation as experts and agents (Alderson & Morrow, 2011), along with the appreciation of the accessibility of the everyday and unfinished nature of walking (Phillips, 2005). Walking is also shaped by (and reflective of) the social and cultural context, offering potential insight into discursive constructions of children and childhood, neighbourhood identities and what it means to be a citizen. Further to this, walking enabled the child as artist and walk curator, positioning the child in a stronger position and the adult audience in a weaker position. With reference to Goffman’s (1963) social role theory, and the detailed patterns of socially accepted roles and behaviours he examined, the Walking Neighbourhood project actively problematised the roles of child and adult by inverting the social roles of the adult as ‘responsible carer’ and child as ‘follower.’ This in itself immediately created a shift in child to adult power dynamics, and highlights the potential that walking as an arts practice has in producing relational and socially-engaged art ‘that aims to produce new social relationships and thus new social realities’ (Springgay, 2008, A/r/tography and the ethical relation, Para 9).

Only in recent years has walking become increasingly central as a means of both creating new embodied ways of knowing as an arts practice and in the production of scholarly narrative (Pink, Hubbard, O’Neill, & Radley, 2010; Springgay, 2011). The workshop development and actual facilitation of child-curated walks of neighbourhoods provided embodied encounters of spaces for both the child and audience members, with these embodied experiences offering potential for multi-layers of meaning-making for all who participated. The acknowledgement and investigation of the embodied experience of walking, as it was applied in the Walking Neighbourhood, brings an innovative lens to research that requires the foregrounding of participatory and experiential methodology and thereby the blurring of the roles of artist, educator and researcher through genuine
collaborative practice. This is resonant with the arts based research methodology that Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, and Gouzouasis (2008) refer to as a/r/tography.

As a research method, walking has acquired recent growing interest in ethnography and especially in the field of social geography, in particular amongst ethnographers working with contemporary artists for its capacity to capture the experience of living-in-the-world with accountability for our actions, offering what Springgay (2007) refers to as ‘corporeal cartography.’ The experience of walking opens bodies to other bodies and encounters within a view of space as situated, contingent and differentiated. Un/familiar terrain for meaning-making was enabled during the Walking Neighbourhood, as per Corner’s (1999, p. 231) view of ‘drifting’ (walking) as a new practice of mapping that creates a lived experience of un/expected encounters between bodies, allowing for the ‘mapping of alter-native itineraries and subverting dominant readings and authoritarian regimes.’

The potential for subversion of dominance and authoritarianism within this dynamic of corporeal experience and embodied practice is especially pertinent to the provocation for this study: The problematising of the overprotected and controlled experiences available to children.

PUBLIC PEDAGOGY
In the last decade, there has been growing recognition and interest in learning in places beyond recognised educational settings such as schools (Sandlin, O’Malley, & Burdick, 2011). Many have begun to investigate and write about the potential for learning outside educational institutions with reference to the term public pedagogy, as informed largely by the work of Giroux (2001, 2002, 2004). Scholarship in public pedagogy acknowledges pedagogies that operate informally, away from structured locales of educational institutions, and in ‘everyday’ formats. From this position, locations such as the street (Hickey, 2010, 2012), Hollywood film (Giroux, 2002), corporate branding (Kincheloe, 2002) and acts of performative social activism (Brady, 2006) have been studied as examples within which public pedagogies occur. This work is also deeply interested in the development of identities and social formations in the public sphere, and the relationships that play out between pedagogy, democracy and social action (Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010b).

Public spaces as informal sites of learning and public pedagogy can cultivate a subtler, embodied mode of learning that moves ‘towards notions of affect, aesthetics and presence’ (Sandlin et al., 2011, p. 348).
The Walking Neighbourhood addressed the affect and presence of citizenship and social activism, and the aesthetics of agency deployed within the public spaces of the city.

In terms of citizenship the project sought to explore what it meant to be a citizen for children within the public spaces of the city. The project takes place in a public space, as the children navigate a neighbourhood and share their learnings and interests with the public through publicly advertised guided walks. In some ways this project may be read as performed social activism, as social inequality (and the associated hegemonic discriminatory discourses) for children were collectively interrupted through the act of creating child-led walking tours of an urban space. This aligns with the examples of performative social activism discussed by Brady (2006), which included ‘grass-roots organisations, neighbourhood projects, art collectives, and town meetings—spaces that provide a site for compassion, outrage, humor, and action’ (p. 58). Walking Neighbourhood hosted by children is a community cultural development arts project that sought to cultivate compassion and outrage for conventions that exclude or restrict children’s participation, through humour and action. Such public pedagogical endeavours are interested in transgression (Sandlin et al., 2011), to push socially enforced boundaries, and create opening for new ways of being and learning.

Walking Neighbourhood hosted by children offered possibilities for children to collaborate with neighbourhood businesses, local citizens and artists to engage in the creative innovation of public spaces, whilst challenging the perceived ‘lack’ children have as collaborators in live art, urban geography and active citizenship. The process of both developing the walks and undertaking the performance of the walks themselves provide a possible blueprint for a public pedagogy that cultivates inter-generational civic engagement. By navigating and establishing a ‘corporeal geography’ (Springgay, 2008), the act of walking invoked a pedagogical intent of learning space and learning relationships.

Walking the neighbourhood, and curating a tour for adult participants engages both child tour curator and adult participant in a negotiation with the multiple meanings the space invokes and the convergence of understandings child and adult carry with them into the space. This pedagogical endeavour seeks to uncover the ‘logics’ (Hickey, 2012) invested into the space in the act of making sense of it. By this we refer to those logics that shape and define a culture- its taken-
for-granted assumptions and mechanisms for framing identities and experience. These logics of culture shape how individuals come to understand both themselves and their situation, but importantly, exert a pedagogical influence in that they are learnt as ‘ordinary’ and ‘everyday’ aspects of a culture. In short, this project sought to uncover how these everyday assumptions functioned, by appropriating taken-for-granted positionalities of young people and adults via the provocation walking the city enabled. In this instance, walking provided an opportunity for learning as a social act, and provoked the re-negotiation of space and meaning produced across generations as a public pedagogy.

For this project, the space of the neighbourhood was recognised as a site of public pedagogy, in which mediations of the space and experiences had within it were read according to the way navigations of the space are learnt. The process of coming to know a space, of navigating it, and translating understandings to others carried pedagogical dimensions with the interactions between child walk curators and adult participants standing as a key expression of this process.

**METHODOLOGY**

The researchers and arts workers collaborated with children as artists (walking hosts) as informed by a rights-respecting approach to child research (Beazley, Bessell, Ennew, & Waterson, 2009) to conduct a critical ethnographic study with walking as the method of inquiry (Phillips, 2005). A critical stance was taken to our ethnographic methodology of seeking to understand the lived experiences of children pertaining to the public sphere, from the basis of our research concerns for social impositions on children’s inclusion and participation in the public sphere. As noted by Madison (2005) we engaged with the research ‘with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain’ (p. 5).

A group of 12 children aged between 8 and 12 years self-nominated to participate in the pilot of the *Walking Neighbourhood hosted by children* project. The child participants were recruited largely through personal connections. Due to the potentially perceived contentious nature of the project it was collectively decided that the pilot would be conducted with ‘known’ communities in which trust was pre-established. The community building practices employed by the arts workers rapidly nurtured rapport and trust between children, their families, local businesses and community
members. Contact Inc. arts workers facilitated a series of eight workshops to develop the child-curated walks. Participant–researchers combined roles of arts worker and researcher throughout the workshopping process, whilst documenting and analysing the development and performance of this pilot. This positioned the researchers as equal members of the whole project team, working with the children and arts workers, cultivating a collegial sought prior to each recording and public sharing of findings.

The neighbourhood of Brisbane’s Fortitude Valley was deliberately chosen as a provocation to the widely held perception of the Valley as dangerous, ‘unsavoury’ and definitely not a safe space for children. The management of the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts, located in the Valley agreed to the use of their site as a workshop space and hub for the public event, which attracted 330 audience members over a weekend in August 2012, with two sessions on each day. In each session, each child host led 15-minute long walks to a self-chosen destination in the neighbourhood surrounding the Judith Wright Centre with groups of approximately four to eight audience members two to three times (equating to up to 12 walks led by each child in total). To assist with time-keeping and crowd control a volunteer young adult accompanied each child host on their walk. The volunteer’s assistance was only drawn on in necessity; the foregrounded premise was for the child host to have clear space to lead.

As a relational arts practice, the child-curated walks invited encounters and exchanges between individuals in social realities: ‘an aesthetic of civic engagement’ (O’Donell, 2006). As a research method, walking offered ‘rich and fuller translations of bodily experience’ (Pink, 2009, p. 149), and as a way of becoming a ‘citizen,’ involving negotiation and regard for the ‘other’ (Springgay, 2011). The method of child-curated walks was co-constructed by the researchers and arts workers across regular meetings, phone calls and email exchanges. The aim of the project was to explore community resilience and right to public space engagement through a process that empowers children, welcoming their creative freedom and expression. The research investigated how child-curated walks provoke social change for children, neighbourhoods and civic learning.

The roles of arts worker and researcher blurred. Arts workers actively discussed, theorised, and analysed in the inquiry, just as researchers actively co-contributed to the provocations that facilitated the development of the child-curated workshops. The research questions,
data, interpretations and ‘moments of bafflement’ (Spivak, 1990, p. 137) were openly shared with the child hosts, who were also welcomed as researchers navigating urban spaces collecting visual data, and interviewing each other about their encounters. Reflective dialogue between all participants was actively embedded into the process.

FINDINGS

Walking Neighbourhood hosted by children was conceptualised collaboratively by researchers and artists as social provocation or, in terms of public pedagogy, what Brady (2006) refers to as performative social activism. The project was an orchestrated act of role reversal that was performed to revision the visibility and possibilities for children in public space, so that they could be listened to and treated as equals. The act of children leading adults created learning of different roles and behaviours for both the host children and adult audience members. The tours were purposefully designed to create the experience of one child being alone with a group of adults, as an atypical social experience, and actively confronted the social fear of a child being alone with adults not known to them. During the workshop processes for creating these child-led neighbourhood walks, the children did experience some explicit awareness raising of considerations when crossing roads and initiating conversations with adults, through real experience, interactive games, and role plays. These workshop processes were not instructional but rather encouraged the children to become more aware of the what, how, where and why of crossing roads (see Figure 1) and leading conversations, through active questioning, highlighting of critical moments and debriefing. The skills of road crossing and conversation leading were explored in the workshops, so that the children felt equipped to lead the tours without the interference of adults. The decision to do this was based on observations that road safety and conversation were typically managed by adults, as children in public spaces are typically regarded as adult responsibilities and are hence denied voice (Mayall, 2000). The following discusses the experiences of children being in charge, child–adult role reversal, and experiencing a child-unfriendly space, such as Fortitude Valley through the views of children.
Children being in charge

Children are so rarely given the opportunity to be in charge, to lead, or to host. The orchestrated act of the *Walking Neighbourhood hosted by children* created this opportunity. The child hosts expressed significant enthusiasm at the prospect of being able to lead an exploration of urban space, and demonstrated this via consistent highly energised active participation. This was also exemplified when a child host was heard telling his older adolescent brother about the walks and qualified the invitation with the delighted exclamation of: ‘And we are in charge!’ The freedom participants had to lead activities and the pedagogy of co-creativity utilised by the arts workers further attributed to this engaged and participatory experience.

Parent observations of their own children consistently identified that their child’s confidence improved through the experience of the *Walking Neighbourhood* project. Exemplified with such comments:

“after that project, yeah he felt very proud of himself” (Laura - parent)

“I think they came away with a certain degree of confidence and ownership over the project” (Melissa - parent).

And the children themselves also recognized how the project affected their confidence. Such as seen in Lily’s comment:
“I think it is sad that it is done, but now I’m really confident with walking with people that I don’t know and showing them the Valley.”

Although such a finding for a project that sought to enact children’s participation rights is not new, as Chawla and Heft (2002) noted in their evaluation of participation programs ten years ago, what does require exploration is how these gains were achieved. Many of the parents saw a relationship between their children’s improved confidence and how the arts workers and researchers in the project really listened to the children. For example, Laura, Clare and Melissa shared the following observations:

“they gave him a lot of attention…and I think that made him understand that people are interested in children and there is a place for him” (Laura)

“the fact that people wanted to hear what THEY noticed, and how they thought about things, that was, you know what they really enjoyed” (Clare)

“I think the kids really, really appreciated getting to know each other, giving a little bit of themselves to the project and also having their voice heard and their thoughts” (Melissa).

And child host, Brad, explained his experience of the workshops with:

“I think it’s really fun ‘cos they are not really harassing you and bossing you around [as compared to school]”.

Engagement with children as active citizens was at the very heart of the project, so this concern flowed into the practices of all participating adults, be they arts workers, researchers, volunteers, photographers, or designers. We listened to the children, giving our full attention, and in doing so, met the objectives that Roberts (2008) notes when suggesting that ‘listening to children is central to recognising and respecting their worth as human beings’ (p. 264). The participating children were the artists, the hosts, the leaders, simply those who the project was all about. The project brought to the fore consciousness of possibilities (e.g., identifying new roles and new ways of being and new uses of public space), welcomed gains (e.g., confidence in initiating conversations with adults and crossing roads) and troubling tar- rains (e.g., exclusion from spaces) for children as active citizens in public spaces. The arts workers,
children and researchers constantly negotiated the pedagogy pertaining to these factors.

**Role reversal appreciated – challenging for adults**

This project had clear intent for social change for children. Many studies (e.g., Australian Capital Territory Government, 2004; MacNaughton & Smith, 2008; Phillips, 2010, 2011b; Saballa et al., 2008) which preface children’s participation in public contexts have found young people have the capacity to conceptualise and enact a public identity, and in doing so, demonstrate complex citizenship capabilities. However, adult discursive constructions of children and citizenship form barriers or limitations for the scope of children’s practice of citizenship (Phillips, 2010, 2011a). Though sociologies of childhood (e.g., Corsaro, 2005) have cultivated a greater shift towards a view of children as social actors, entrenched social patterns of children being viewed as ‘non per-sons’ combined with common exclusionary adult behaviours (including the type of civil inattention towards children that Goffman (1963) detailed 50 years ago) are still widely evident. The *Walking Neighbourhood hosted by children* project was thus explicitly interested to see how adults responded to the role reversal of being led by a child around a known adult-focussed urban space, provoking alterations to patterns of adult and child behaviours in the public.

Some of the adult audience members who were cognisant of the children’s participation movement noted benefits for children, whilst acknowledging the greater challenges involved in shifting adult attitudes:

“I was very interested in seeing the young people being empowered, to take charge, to depart knowledge that they had, that was exclusive to them…. children learning about their urban environment, and learning about how to step up and take charge. For the adults, I think there is a harder barrier to breach.” (Lone)

The encounter provoked by the walks nudged adults to change their behaviours around children. For example, Chris commented that the child-led walk provoked him to let go of his adult caretaker behaviours:

“letting go of control, letting go trying to help them be tour guides, just stopping all that, stopping trying to help them cross the road or trying to help them come up with the right stories, that was a challenge, to sit back and let them do it.”
Sophiaan summed up the approach that the adult needed to adopt to fully experience the child-led walk:

“you have to come with an open mind, so you say ok this is what the kids are going to tell us. But really affirming they are very intellectual in that sense.”

This shift in social behaviours was not only felt by those who attended the walks, but was also witnessed by pedestrians who noticed the unusualness of the child-led walks, as observed by Brian (an adult audience member).

“I think what I was really aware of was how people were taking notice of listening to a child, you know I think that is really valuable because we are obviously too big a group to be just family, and the fact that we had an interest in what she was saying, I could see them thinking: ‘what are they doing?’”

The child-led walks cultivated public pedagogy, as a political act, by interrupting and recon-figuring discursive and material structures of subordination in public space (Brady, 2006), as adult audience members (and observant onlookers) were challenged to think and/or act out of their cultural norms: to acknowledge child competence and intelligence, and to openly engage with children’s perspectives.

Rethinking and being otherwise in Brisbane’s Fortitude Valley

One set of the preparatory ‘rehearsal’ workshops for the walking tours were held on Tuesday afternoons between 4 and 6 pm across 6 weeks. It was noted that during that time we could count on one hand the number of other children sighted in the Valley. Brian, an audience member, commented on the widely held child-unfriendly perception of the Valley and how the project challenged this:

“I think it is also that thing of the Valley, not a place where you expect to see kids, or have the knowledge of the place, you know, it's really great to remind us children have spaces as well, and there are no no-go-zones.”

Brian’s comment highlights how the project worked to challenge socially demarcated child and adult spaces. Children navigated spaces (as leaders) that were commonly recognised as adult spaces. The learning of such an encounter provoked adults to question taken-for-granted practices of excluding children from certain spaces, with these decisions to exclude being typically based on discourses of protection and
childhood innocence (Phillips, 2010, 2011a) read against spaces deemed too dangerous or not befitting of children’s playful interests. Some examples of the destination of the walks that may be read to border the child–adult demarcation of spaces were a tattoo parlour, hidden laneways, and a stairwell of graffiti.

The children were fascinated by spaces from which they were forbidden, such as clubs and bars (of which there are plenty in the Valley), and expressed cognisance around what happens in these bars and clubs. They relayed very clear maps of access. The back entrance of a music venue (a stairwell – see Figure 2) was explored by the children with great fascination, as it was an open space for graffiti jam-packed with tags (identity signatures), graphics, symbols, illustrations by hundreds of creators/scribes/artists, with hundreds of back stories. Brad (age 12) selected this site as the destination for his walk. He explained to his walkers that the owners opened this space to graffiti, so their clientele can do graffiti without getting arrested. He then invited walkers to add to the crowded canvas of walls and stairwell (see Figure 3). The first question asked was: ‘Is it legal?’ Brad reassured the heavily regulated adults: ‘Yes, it’s legal’ as he handed out permanent markers. The child nudged the adults to do the forbidden in a rarely found space where it is permissible without penalty: boundaries were pushed and shared. The adults needed reassurance from the child before undertaking the risky behaviour.

Lefebvre’s (see Brenner & Elden, 2009) suggestion that space is political and ideological has relevance here. In capitalist society, property is valued and therefore protected; this is the socially ingrained meaning. Yet the owners of the music venue have welcomed another meaning, another function to this stairwell: for graffiti making. Brad readily welcomed this, yet many of the adults (after many years of social conditioning) required further explanations to enable what they viewed as ‘risky’ behaviour. Adults usually tell children the rules, and children usually seek guidance from adults. Some adults seemed uneasy/unsettled with this, as demonstrated through hesitation and the need for reassurance.

Exploring the Valley under the guidance of a child clearly altered how some adults experienced this neighbourhood, as evidenced in Sophiaan’s comment:

“usually we don’t necessarily like to go to the Valley because there are so many people, but today was a different experience altogether. Yeah I don’t know more positive in a way”.
Many audience members commented on how they saw different aspects of the Valley that they had not noticed previously. The public space of Brisbane’s Fortitude Valley became a site for public pedagogy, inviting participants to rethink space, as Massey (2005) has suggested, as the product of interrelations; a sphere of possibility and always under construction.

One of the child hosts, Erin a 10-year-old girl, certainly provoked the rethinking of space. In determining where she wanted to take her walk, Erin decided that she wanted to dance in the window frontage of a clothing shop on the corner of two main roads of Brisbane’s Fortitude Valley. ‘I just want to get people to dance,’ Erin declared in the workshops. Erin chose the site for its high visibility, to increase the potential numbers for public dancing. However, after weeks of the project’s arts workers contacting various levels of management of the clothing store to seek their approval and support for Erin to lead up to 12 walks across 2 days to their store for public dancing, the answer was ‘No’. The suggested alternative use of space from static (fixed shop mannequins) to kinetic was not welcomed. The shift was a leap out of the store manager’s comfort zone and as they had control of the space, they could stipulate the meaning ascribed to the shop front – in this case *static use*. Erin was obviously disappointed but accepted that another, more ‘suitable’ site for dancing needed to be located.

At the last rehearsal/workshop session (4 days before the public event) an open undercover space (approximately 7 x 12 m) in front of an unnamed (and perhaps unused) low-level office block that had reflective glass on two frontages was chosen because it effectively provided an
outdoor and publicly visible dance studio. At the beginning of each of her walks, Erin would say ‘if you don’t like dancing or doing stuff in front of other people you should probably go on another walk.’ Casey (Erin’s young adult buddy who accompanied her on her walks) summed up audience of experience Erin’s walk with:

“generally what seemed to happen was Erin would get in there and I would help out by dancing my little feet off and people would join in – they would laugh and really enjoy themselves…She really succeeded in getting everyone dancing….Even passers-by would stop and look and smile or giggle.”

Erin’s audiences danced in their own way, they followed Erin’s dance moves (see Figure 4), show-cased their signature moves, and united to create a ‘worm’ move by tracking the reflected arm movements from one to another in the glass office-front. They united through the joy of dancing.

Erin’s walk highlights the capacity of children to envision new possibilities for a public space. This empty space was usually walked passed and ignored. Erin wanted people of all ages to dance with her in public even though unfortunately (to us, as keen dance advocates), dancing is not a common street behaviour or *modus operandi* of pedestrians. Yet, Erin made this possible, through the sharing of her interest in dance in a relaxed casual way; she inspired others to break out of the constrained social conventions of how to move in public. For the walkers this was an embodied experience of public pedagogy (Pink et al., 2010; Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010a), in that the experience of being in the public with others was felt through their bodies, through appreciating and sharing movement innovations. The experience of dancing with a group of unknown others in a public space clearly broke boundaries of what is socially acceptable, to which some audience members readily transgressed that boundary, whereas others soon warmed to the transgression. The experience generated new ways of being with unknown others in public spaces; it brought new possibilities and shared joy, cultivating appreciation of what Massey (2005) referred to as the inter-relationality of space. In city spaces people rarely acknowledge each other, let alone dance together.
CLOSING COMMENT ON IMPLICATIONS

The collaborative arts project, Walking Neighbourhood hosted by children offered the opportunity for embodied public pedagogy. The idea of children leading walking tours of a neighbourhood is simple in itself, though because of the widespread trend of children being vigilantly chaperoned in most Western nations, this project became political as it challenged dominant discourses of child protection and childhood innocence. This social shift provoked adults to adjust the way they related to children and to question taken-for-granted practices and perceptions pertaining to child–adult demarcated social spaces.

Participation in the project provided explicit enacted civic learning that is commonly absent from other aspects of the children’s lives; in particular schooling. The children felt empowered and stepped up to the task of leading groups of adults around a busy metropolitan neighbourhood, thereby building civic learning and possibilities for engagement as active citizens in the public sphere.

The practice of walking offered ready entry for all participants, through its everyday familiarity. Through walking we engaged in embodied learning as we saw, smelt, touched, heard, felt and even tasted (for those who went on the Lily’s gelati walk in particular!) the neighbourhood of Brisbane’s Fortitude Valley. By walking together, learning was relational. In each walk the participants talked to each other, and considered each other when negotiating traffic and narrow or obstructed spaces. Adults and
children negotiated new ways of relating to each other, as the widespread trend of children being the responsibility of adults in public spaces (Mayall, 2000) was challenged through intentional, performed social activism (Brady, 2006) of adult–child role reversal. This role shifts provoked adults to recognise the capabilities of children cultivating attitudinal shifts towards children, with the potential that these adults may carry a more welcoming view to their subsequent interactions with children. In previous studies the common barrier to children’s citizenship participation was adult held deficit-perceptions of children (e.g., Phillips, 2010). Collectively, Walking Neighbourhood hosted by children cultivated multiple moments for rethinking and renegotiating what it means for both children and adults to be citizens, via explorations of the interrelationality, multiplicity of possibilities, and ongoing constructive nature of public space.

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