

**Walking as a research modality: the three paths of Francesco Careri in
São Paulo - SP**

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ABSTRACT

This article approaches walking as a research modality in São Paulo from the analysis of tree paths by the Italian architect Francesco Careri carried out in the capital of São Paulo at different times. In this sense, the text written through an analysis of the practice of the path taken in the Comunidade de São Francisco (Zona Leste), in Praça Victor Civita (Zona Oeste) and in Bixiga (Centro). In this way, the main objective of this article is to reconstruct the path of the Italian architect in the city of São Paulo, as well as to analyze his experiences, relating them to work in his book: Walkscapes: o caminhar como prática estética (2013) and Caminhar e Parar (2017), thus detailing this type of research in São Paulo.

KEY WORDS: Francesco Careri. Walk. São Paulo

1 INTRODUCTION

There are several reasons that lead a person to walk, the displacement from one point to another; the practice of physical activity; leisure; to the simple act of either wandering around or jaunting, in order to experience the city. Thus, walking is a practice intrinsic to the nature of man, walking is an inductive act that provides us with a time different from the one that modernity proposes to us: acceleration. Walking is present in the public space, in the city or outside it, going towards its margins.

Therefore, for this work it is intended to produce an understanding about walking as a modality of research through three paths, carried out by the Italian professor and architect Francesco Careri¹ in the city of São Paulo, in particular: in the Community of San Francisco (East Zone); in Victor Civita Square (West Zone); and Bixiga (Center) (Figure 1).

Thus, the central purpose of this article is to map the Italian architect's itinerary on São Paulo soil, as well as to understand the concepts worked in his books: "Walkscapes: walking as an aesthetic practice" (2013); "Walking and stopping" (2017), analyzing some practices carried out in the city of São Paulo.

Figure 1 - Areas of the three routes carried out by Francesco Careri in the city of São Paulo (Community of San Francisco, Victor Civita Square and Bixiga).



Source: PREPARED BY THE AUTHORS, 2022.

Francesco Careri founded and integrated the Roman artists collective stalker, which still in 1995, organized the first peripathetic itinerary across the edges of Rome, Italy. The group proposed a new design to represent the city: a large archipelago. This first action of the collective was named Stalker Attraversso i Territori Attuali. The walk encouraged leaving Rome known to investigate what was beyond the walls, in search of the margins of the formal city: a practice of walking through marginal, peripheral and indeterminate urban spaces.

The route was designed through a city, other than a historic, touristy, or rural Rome, but, fundamentally, the intermediate spaces around the city. The collective Stalker sought to cross the mutant spaces that resembled the zone of the film Stalker by Andrei Tarkovski, which gave rise to the name of the group; the nomadic spaces, the borders, the vacant land.

The collective Stalker had as reference a vast repertoire of Dadaist artists, surrealists, situationists and land art. The aim was to "Experiment with new cognitive forms through the reintegration of art and science research paths (...)" (CARERI, 2013, p. 161).

Thus, Francesco Careri began to work walking as an instrument of indeterminate project, which develops during practice, welcoming incidents of course; an unfinished sense by nature. The practice of *andare a zonzo*, from the Italian: "wandering", is rescued by the architect Francesco Careri and relates to the sense of error, of the wandering of the *flâuner* of the nineteenth century, in addition to the concepts of the drift of the international situationist of Guy Debord in the modern city, to thus investigate the perceptions about the contemporary city. In it our feet are found with voids, ruined areas, places exposed to time.

Therefore, in this new spatial conformation, this concept, luckily, was updated by transubstantiation, a aimless walk through voids, residual spaces, zones at the mercy of time. It is in this sense that the Italian architect Francesco Careri has been building the genesis of the practice of walking, revealing possibilities for new discoveries, beyond the cities known for postcards. Walking is a way of experiencing urban reality directly and closer to the reality to be experienced.

Figure 2 - Cover image of *walkscapes: walking as aesthetic practice* (2013).



Source: REWORKED BY THE AUTHORS FROM THE COVER OF THE BOOK *WAKSCAPES* (2013), 2022.

In his writings, one of his most prominent works, Walkscapes: walking as an aesthetic practice, Francesco Careri invites us to an experience of walking not only the history of walking, but also some urban territories. This double articulation highlights what interests us to articulate in this article, a kind of experimental methodology existing in the practice of walking. In an interview with Paola Berenstein Jacques (2011, online), Careri points out that the practice of walking emerges from the desire to know what existed on the other side, beyond the city that was discussed by his professors at the university (Faculty of Architecture of Rome). Consequently, in 2005, when he became a professor at the Università degli Studi Roma Tre, I offered a course entitled Civic Art, because since Stalker he realized that the practice of walking was important for qualification not only students, but also citizens.

Civic Arts is the course I would have liked to attend as a student: an exploration and a reappropriation of the city; wandering as a research and didactic methodology; the direct experimentation of the art of discovery and the poetic and political transformation of places. The nomadic university so often dreamed and pursued with Stalker. (CARERI, 2017, p. 102)

Thus, Civic Arts is a course that develops walking, in which its goal is not "only the production of objects, installations and or paintings, (...) but also wanderings, meanings, relationships" (CARERI, 2017, p. 100). In this context, it may be able to physically and symbolically transform a natural space, because walking is a cognitive and creative act. Discipline emerges as a participatory and labyrinthine practice, a ambulation that allows reading, interpreting and transforming cities. It results in especially effective in a city like São Paulo, whose features make up a prolix urban morphology forged by real estate capital despite the poorer portions (FIORIN, 2003, p.37). Because of this, we want to bring out here the routes that were carried out by Francesco Careri in the city of São Paulo, and thus be able to understand more about this type of research so that it is applied in ground paths. In a cognitive and creative way to perception about the city that is not only the result of a European look and make.

Francesco Careri was present a few times from Brazil. In 2011, he was invited to the II Urbicentros International Seminar in Maceió, with the theme "Construction, reconstruction, deconstruction: death and life of urban centers". The event was held by the Graduate Program in Architecture and Urbanism (PPGAU/DEHA) of the Federal University of Alagoas, where it discussed the historical, architectural and cultural value of urban areas. Also, in September 2011 Francesco Careri, during the editorial course of Redobra, organized a workshop at the CORPOCIDADE event, held at the Urban Laboratory of the Federal University of Bahia, in Salvador. It is noteworthy that he was once again at Urbicentros V, in João Pessoa, in 2016, now at the Federal University of Paraíba UFPB. That same year, he was a guest lecturer at the Flip-Paraty Literary Festival in Rio de Janeiro.

In the case of São Paulo, Francesco Careri's presence is verified at three different moments. In 2012, he participated in São Paulo Calling visiting the Community of San Francisco (East Zone). In 2013, he was at the X Biennial of Architecture speaking at Victor Civita Square

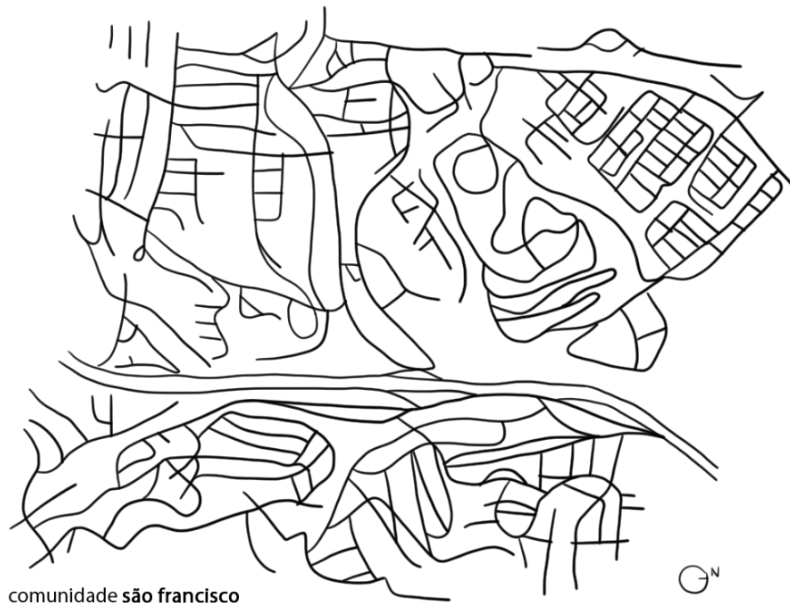
(West Zone). And finally, in 2016, he was invited to an event at the Sesc Research and Training Center organized by the City School, which proposed a tour of bixiga (Center). In this article, we seek to analyze three events of the Italian architect Francesco Careri held in the capital of São Paulo at different times. Two of these events were revealed as routes and one as a lecture (parade). Addressed in this aspect, the text develops reflections on the practice of walking through these moments, a journey made in the Community of San Francisco, a lecture given in Victor Civita Square and a stroll in Bixiga. Thus, he understands concepts in his books, "(...)" as a key capable of opening doors to environmental perception and projectation in contemporary times. This is because, it keeps in its pages, the possibilities for new discoveries and adventures, tracing the genesis of the practice of walking (...)" (FIORIN; VASCONCELOS, 2021, online).

2 THE ROUTES OF FRANCESCO CARERI IN SÃO PAULO SOIL

2.1 SAN FRANCISCO COMMUNITY

In 2012, Francesco Careri participated in the project entitled São Paulo Calling¹, an action that flourished with the objective of discussing policies developed by the city of São Paulo and others implemented in different locations that face problems related to informal settlements. On this visit, Francesco Careri scheduled a trip to the Community of San Francisco (Figure 2), the third largest settlement in the city of São Paulo, located in the region of São Mateus (East Zone), which, at the time of the visit, housed an average of 35,000 inhabitants.

Figure 3 - Tour of the Community of San Francisco.



Source: PREPARED BY THE AUTHORS, 2022.

¹ Promoted by the Municipal Department of Housing (SEHAB) of the city of São Paulo, it was organized by Stefano Boeri who took other journeys like this in different areas of the city of São Paulo.

The practice of walking through the São Francisco Community was reported in the book "Walking and Stopping (2017)" and described by the architect in a way that reveals the cultural and territorial diversity present in Brazil, as well as in other countries of South America. Therefore, it is essential to understand this modality of research so that it can be applied in solo paths, in order to produce a perception about the city that is not the result of only a European look and make. This conception is highlighted in his work in the following excerpt:

We are going a different path from the one previously established and Negotiated, even in areas where it might not have been convenient for us to show up without notice. This proves some tension, however everything will be fine until the end. (CARERI, 2017, p. 85).

For the practice of walking as an instrument it is essential to enter alleys and climb hills, mostly inaccessible by its invisible barriers. Caution is needed, especially in the case of command-controlled locations, such as in the Community of San Francisco (East Zone). Therefore, it is essential to establish prior agreed relationships. Nonetheless, according to Francesco Careri, the route is a way of providing discoveries for an encounter with the "Others"; "the journey develops between insidias and dangers, provoking in those who walk a strong state of apprehension, in both meanings, of feeling fear and apprehending". (CARERI, 2013, p. 80). Thus, the idea of walking through the city as a unique way of knowing it truly defends itself, ensuring its democratic form (CARERI, 2013, p. 170)

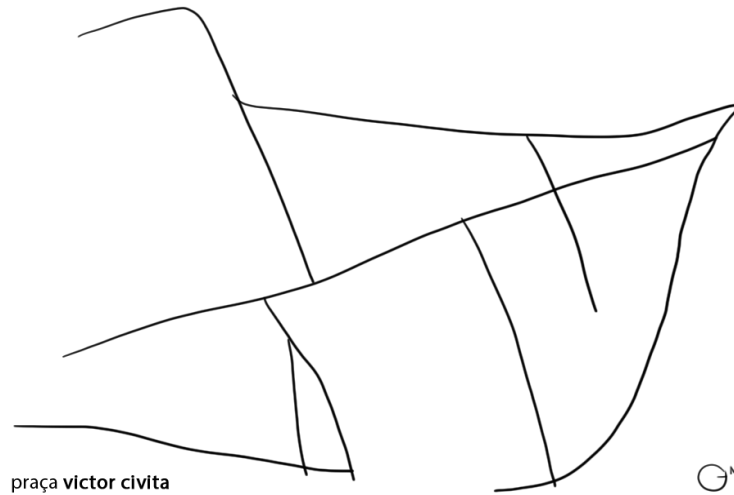
Francesco Careri considers the territorial expansion of the city as: "(...) an organic filamentous tissue that clusters into more or less dense granules" (CARERI, 2013, p. 157). In addition, it understands that urban space-time has nuances of speed that will result in a stupendal of the centers and continuous transformations of the margins. In this scenario, a structural element draws the architect's attention in this journey: an iron fence that separates the favela from the buildings. It is precisely in this way that the practice of "(...) walking is useful to architecture as a cognitive and projective instrument, as a means to recognize within the chaos of the peripheries a geography and, thus, invent new modalities of intervention in metropolitan public spaces, to research them and to make them visible" (CARERI, 2013, p. 32).

2.2 VICTOR CIVITA SQUARE

In 2013, São Paulo housed a scenario of protests marked by the history of Brazil. The increase in public transport fares was the trigger for demonstrations. In September, the X Architecture Biennial of São Paulo took place, organized by the Brazilian Institute of Architects (IAB-SP) during the management of José Armenian de Brito Cruz. The curators Guilherme Wisnik, Ana Luiza Nobre and Ligia Nobre, in partnership with the company Arte3 and a whole team of researchers, proposed a different modality than usual, exposing some works in the urban fabric and transforming the city into a locus of experience.

With this, The Victor Civita Square (Figure 4), in Pinheiros, on October 14, was the stage of the lecture held by Francesco Careri. In the lecture, Francesco Careri reviewed some of the historical proposals that conceived the act of walking not only as a tool for configuring the landscape, but as an autonomous form of art, an aesthetic instrument of knowledge and physical modification of space.

Figure 4 - Victor Civita Square.



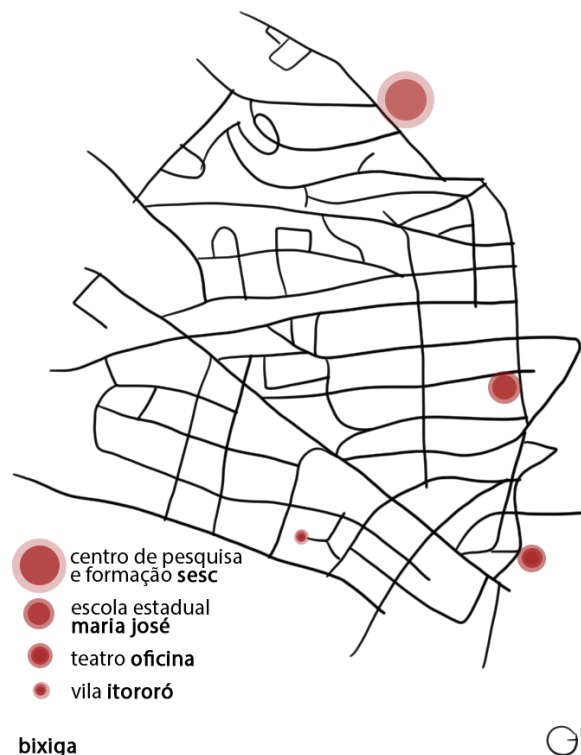
Source: PREPARED BY THE AUTHORS, 2022.

2.3 BIXIGA

Francesco Careri and 40 other people moved through downtown São Paulo, the capital, in the Bixiga neighborhood (Figure 5). An action sponsored by the Research and Training Center of Sesc and the City School, with the Counterconduct Project.² This route took place from the Sesc Research and Training Center to Maria José State School, to the Teatro Oficina de Lina Bo Bardi until reaching Vila Itoororó. This path that traveled through the Center of São Paulo points to an encounter with the "Other" as an opportunity to see the meaning of the places through the subjectivities that inhabit it. The strategy of the route was not to follow a path. They lost time to gain space, i.e., revealing in place a power of the experimental character of discovery.

² A collective political-pedagogical construction, had its origin within the city school council. It was conceived by an interdisciplinary team of professionals, going through various activities of the City School - Seminars, Internship Programs of Scientific and Experimental Research, among others.

Figure 5 - Routes that delimit the Bixiga (center) in São Paulo followed by some landscapes.



Source: PREPARED BY THE AUTHORS, 2022.

The practice of walking crosses the space and the report of the crossing, activates the subjectivity of those who affect and allow themselves to be affected by the routes. Thus, "(...) the route is a space before the architectural space (...)" (CARERI, 2013, p.63) in which urban information is produced and, from it, can result in new meanings through the reports. After all, "(...) walking is an action that focuses on the ground. It is an act that draws a figure on the ground and that, therefore, can be transbed on a cartographic representation." (CARERI, 2013, p.133).

3 CONCLUSION

From the steps of Francesco Careri in Brazil, a survey of the places visited by him in São Paulo was carried out, comprising three areas, namely: Community of San Francisco (east zone), Victor Civita Square (west zone) and Bixiga (center). From the data collected from the three routes, some graphic representations were elaborated that evidenced the organizational disparities of the territory and these landscapes. Based on this finding, it is observed here that urban planning is born on foot, in a participatory way, showing itself as a method that can allow to read and transform cities.

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