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Blurred Lines

Challenging Urban Grids On and Off the Page in City Illustration

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Tânia A. Cardoso

Blurred Lines:
Challenging Urban
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in City Illustration

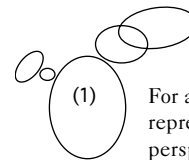
abstract This paper draws parallels between the acts of walking and drawing in the city as appropriations of the urban grid. Following Michel de Certeau's theorisation of urban practices, it reflects on both my own drawing in situ practice and [the] picture book *The Soft*

Atlas of Amsterdam by Jan Rothuizen. Both reflect lived experiences and (urban, spatial) stories, determined by and reshaping the city's constructions of spatiality and an urban imaginary. By distorting the pictorial grid, the illustrations speak back to mapped city space, emphasizing that a line between two spatial elements is not blank but rather full of social and cultural significance. These illustrations, by revealing space through metaphorical practices, disrupt the authoritarian logic of city planners and traditional mapping, creating blurred lines in the urban grid and in its corresponding pictorial grid. This way, their heterogeneous, embodied depictions echo the city's impact on both artists' imaginations.

Introduction

How do you breathe life into a map?

Although there is some scholarly debate about cities focusing on the intersection between subjective practices and cartography, it is still not clear how these practices give visibility to the complexity of the city beyond its official urban grid.⁽¹⁾ This grid is complex, made up of different layers of architectural and urban space that might be appropriated by inhabitants in unexpected ways. In fact, this uncertainty problematizes conventional views of the urban grid as a stable, immobile element. In practice, the urban grid is viewed as the physical layout produced by the city planner, and its pictorial grid is manifested in traditional mapping according to this physical layout. Thus, the pictorial grid defines a map of objects where urban space is frequently represented as blank.⁽²⁾ Attending to both the pictorial and physical in this way therefore requires a drawing practice in situ, which takes walking as a fundamental



(1)

For a discussion of maps as multi-dimensional, visual-representational vehicles of thought, see Camp; for a contrasting perspective on contemporary map making as a reductive view of the referent city, see Solnit (*Wanderlust*); and on the importance of human embodied experience and perception in drawing space, see Ingold and Harvey.

(2)

On the problems related to the concept of cartographic illusion, see Ingold (234); and on the historical tradition of map making focusing on the representation of empty and constructed space, see the 1748 Nolli map of Rome on *The Nolli Map Website*.

act, representing urban complexity at the ground level and filling in the blank spaces in the pictorial grid.

This paper examines particular cases of such in situ urban illustrations — drawings by Jan Rothuizen, as well as reflections on my own drawing practice. In doing so, it follows Michel de Certeau's conceptualization of everyday urban practices and their reciprocal relation to their surroundings. Particularly, it reclaims the potentialities of drawing — when combined with walking practices — to resist and complicate traditional mapping's domination of urban space and its representations. It asks: What happens when we consider what both urban, spatial practices can do together?

According to the artist Aileen Harvey, drawing is akin to walking insofar as it is a practice of putting bodies in motion through an ever-changing environment. Following this, I understand that both these movements create space, filling it with activity and diversity. As Tim Cresswell notes of mobility, these movements are both “products and producers of power” (2). Therefore, capturing this experience in illustration highlights the fact that a movement in space is already imbued with meaning and ideology.

Both moving through space and representing it, understood in this way, renegotiate what that space means; walking and drawing are therefore understood in this paper as productive, *metaphorical* practices.

Metaphors, which de Certeau correlates to the Greek word “*metaphorai*” for means of transportation, are ever-changing everyday stories of cities that create space and urban knowledge. In other words, de Certeau relates metaphors to stories because they are “spatial trajectories...and practices” and — just like narrative structures — they organize places through the displacements they describe (115). Space, in these terms, is “practiced place” (117), distinct from its geographical configuration and composed by intersections of metaphors in place. Thus, urban space and metaphor are also intrinsically connected to daily-life: the urban practices and movements of city dwellers, which, according to de Certeau conform to the urban grid but are, simultaneously, active elements in the production and appropriation of the environments that surround them (xiv). This means that when dwellers and illustrators appropriate urban space for their own needs, their perception of the urban grid changes, in turn ultimately re-transforming space and spatial practices themselves.

The types of city illustration this article explores are products of embodied experience, artists' personal reflections, and urban legends and stories. Walking, in particular, provides an essential basis for their representations of urban space. In contrast to the top-down view of city planners and mappers, de Certeau states that “[t]he ordinary practitioners of the city live

‘down below’, below the thresholds at which visibility begins” (93). Following this, the interaction between urban space and lived experience can only be revealed through a practice that is also embedded in that interaction. Practices such as drawing in situ, therefore, create space through their connection to spatial practices and stories as part of a tactic to question the pictorial grid and how it overshadows everyday life.

While investigating Rothuizen's drawings and my own illustrative approach, four main initial observations came to mind. The first is that cities have as many layers as the people crossing them and are, therefore, in the words of Rebecca Solnit, “practically inexhaustible” (*Infinite City 2*). Secondly, illustration is a selective process. Thirdly, space cannot be completely or accurately represented in totality.⁽³⁾ Finally, the process of drawing in situ allows for the exploration of the city and the discovery of aspects that are otherwise invisible in traditional city representations. These observations are not guidelines or strict rules, but they inform the importance of using drawing practices as a synthesis of the surrounding environment. Ultimately, the resulting illustrations are communicative: pieces that speak of the city.

Moreover, as alternative maps, these illustrations both reflect and renegotiate the urban grid. Maps, as

common representations of the city, have a particular “ability to reveal relationships and operations in the land” (Bustamante 53), corresponding their two-dimensional format to the geometry of the landscape. However, while revealing the surface, the pictorial grid overlooks the vast majority of other features (55). Subsequently, this reduces the visibility of these practices and highlights a totalizing view of the city that, for de Certeau, is reduced to the perspective of “a solar Eye, looking down like a god” (92). To put it another way, the mapper's perspective shadows lived experience. I here use the word *shadow* with a double meaning. Traditional top-down approaches' emphasis on the urban grid overshadows or puts in shadow lived experience. But, just as 'to shadow' alternately denotes ‘to follow’, mapping can trace fragments of lived experience by glimpses through shadow; lived experience precedes and might (re)inform mapping. The alternative illustrative practices analysed here therefore shadow or follow lived experiences. They put them back on the map by following but obscuring the lines of the urban grid — using it to their advantage.

In the sense of this paper, the act of drawing in situ gives the artist the opportunity to be immersed in place, thus becoming part of his/her surroundings and, in turn, part of the performance of metaphors. What I mean by this is that drawing in situ explores

(3)

See Manolescu (243).

space in an engagement that involves an embodied approach and observation in a form of thinking by making. By navigating the urban grid and becoming itself part of the metaphors, drawing in situ resists the constraints of the pictorial grid opposing its top-down, totalizing determination of space.

Ultimately, this paper suggests that the action of urban walking is similar to the action of drawing in situ as a gathering of sensorial information and awareness of place. Their combination brings forward possibilities for the creation of an image of space, enabling its consequent communication beyond that of a pictorial grid. Specifically, I am discussing the parallels between the two practices as experienced through my own artistic practice of drawing in situ and Jan Rothuizen's illustration book *The Soft Atlas of Amsterdam*. Doing so requires an interdisciplinary methodology that involves both a semiotic approach in the illustration case-studies and an autoethnographic reflection on the exploration of the practice of drawing in situ. These methods aim to tie in my artistic practice as a participant-observer/illustrator in the city to a semiotic analysis to understand how urban space and experiences are translated to illustration through visual signs.

I start by briefly discussing the action of walking through the readings of Michel de Certeau, bringing his theory closer to my own artistic practice of drawing in situ to reassert (beyond de Certeau's claims) the

connections of walking to the practice of drawing. Building on this discussion, I move on in the second section to examining Jan Rothuizen's illustrations of the city of Amsterdam as a metaphorical practice that documents itself in the process of creation. Ultimately, through these analyses and reflections, drawing in situ emerges as a practice that can restore the aspects of lived experience to mapping. In other words, this practice permits the (re)discovery of everyday life otherwise overshadowed by the pictorial grid of traditional map-making — revealing practices, stories and meanings that float above, break, cross or resist the urban grid.

1. Exploring the metaphorical city

An Icarus flying above these waters, he [the observer from atop the World Trade Centre] can ignore the devices of Daedalus in mobile and endless labyrinths far below. His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance... Must one finally fall back into the dark space where crowds move back and forth...? An Icarian Fall.

(de Certeau 92)

The title of this atlas refers to *Soft City*, a book written in 1974... [Author Jonathan Raban's] idea is that the city is where the solid concrete

reality of buildings and asphalt meets the malleable, subjective experience and expectation of the people who live and work there.

(Rothuizen 9)

Michel de Certeau's quote above formulates a critique to an architectural approach to the city where the planner puts himself at a distance, disregarding urban spatial practices, and emphasizing the urban grid and a totalizing vision. As de Certeau formulates, quoting Roland Barthes, this vision actually obscures urban legibility in contrast to "pedestrian movements [that] form one of these 'real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city.' They are not localized; it is rather they that spatialize" (97). Thus, the inhabitants are the ones who walk the city and take agency in navigating the urban grid, regardless of its intended and official use. This agency creates identity in space and infuses it with stories and meanings: fragmented elements that are interpreted by artists and that inspire their illustrations.

The action of walking can be outlined in a map by its trajectory; however, this alone does not indicate what was experienced. De Certeau claims that the "thick or thin curves [of maps] only refer, like words, to the absence of what has passed by [...] [missing] the act itself" (97). In my analysis of Rothuizen's and my own illustrations, my perspective departs from de

Certeau's at the point where he discards the possibilities of capturing the diversity of urban space in a graphic format (99). While the paths represented in these case-studies cannot be shown in totality, urban illustration can combine fragmented elements into a synthesised whole. The illustrator then gives visibility to the spatial story based on his or her practices in space.

Furthermore, de Certeau defines walking as an act of rhetoric, explaining that the body in motion inscribes a path in the environment comparable to how a story is written. He implies that the city's meaning is revealed as it is created by the practices within it, which means that subjective practices and spatial stories are cultural constructions (100). Considering the rhetoric of walking in urban space as equivalent to the art of narrative means that, when combining it with the practice of drawing, the illustrator is not only creating a spatial story but also documenting the practices that surround him or her.

The cultural constructions created by spatial stories draw meshes of trajectories between physical objects in the city, superimposing patterns of mobility over the urban grid. These trajectories between spatial elements disregard the urban grid, highlighting the fact that a line between physical objects is not an unspecified, blank space but rather a movement full of social and cultural significance that embeds space with meaning. In consequence, if an embodied illustrative

practice makes the relationship between walking and drawing apparent, it means that urban space — practiced placed — can be captured in the illustration. In this type of illustration, the path taken (the invisible action) transcends the two-dimensional pictorial grid and gives visibility to the urban space as seen by the artist.

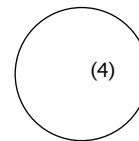
Thus, by interacting with the urban grid in this way, both the illustrator and the wanderer also resist or re-appropriate it. This interaction, therefore, “transforms each spatial signifier into something else” (de Certeau 98), building a fragmented perception of the city, shadowing everyday stories as projections of the human body in urban space. In this sense, the invisible path is revealed through the representation of the lived experience of the city, unlike the restricting view of the pictorial grid determined by the totalizing view of a god’s eye perspective.

Departing from Certeau’s claim that pedestrian movements are actions that spatialize the city and give agency to their dwellers, I suggest that the practice of drawing and walking the urban grid returns agency to the illustrator. Similarly, both my artistic practice and *The Soft Atlas*, which I will analyse in detail in the next section, reflect the embodiment of the illustrator in interaction with urban space and with other bodies. Consequently, the observed metaphors are combined in a complex composition of juxtaposed information that breaks from the urban grid and its rigid pictorial format.

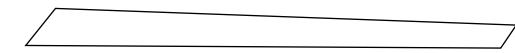
These illustrations are layers of juxtaposed information which directly communicate urban space. As metaphorical practices, they build up from collective action and experience in the city, based on the connections between people and how they respond to urban space.⁽⁴⁾

As a first example of such practice, consider my drawing in Fig. 1. The illustration does not aim to convey an accurate image of urban space, but rather to enrich its representation with contextual and qualitative information, thus personalizing space at a specific time and through a specific body. My aim here was to discover a complex path, interacting with culturally diverse inhabitants and collecting fragments of my own experience of the city: interruptions and setbacks, architecture, empty spaces, non-places, and fluid zones. In other words, the creative process of the illustrator that emerges according to the uses, needs and experiences of urban space extracts different meanings from it, and directly impacts the illustration. This disturbs the urban grid laid out by the city planner, giving visibility to the blank spaces and invisible lines in the pictorial grid.

Drawing in situ is an immersive act which emphasizes embodied and temporal perceptions of space.



(4)



See also the procedure of walking as *dérive* (Debord). For a contemporary reading of walking as collective and aesthetic practice, see Careri.

As my analysis below suggests, this practice attends to the specific place, position and body of the illustrator, combining aspects otherwise alienated by the pictorial grid. In my artistic practice, I envision walking and drawing as similar elements that influence each other in the process of creating space. Drawing in situ, more specifically, is the act by which ordinary activities and unusual situations feed my practice. This process departs from a walk influenced by the space I find myself in and that dictates each movement and pause, in turn influencing my drawing.

My autoethnographic reflection on drawing in situ shows that the practice emphasizes how urban experiences are interpreted and visualized through the movement of the body in the meshes of trajectories. It orients the illustrator in space and conveys the immediate emotional expressions of this interaction in the lines and brushstrokes of the illustration. The recognition of space through walking feeds my drawing practice as I note interesting elements in quick sketches. Later on, these sketches and annotations can be combined into bigger illustrations or small picture books that can be read together or separately. Fig. 2 is an example taken from one of my city sketchbooks that shows how the dynamic between urban space and drawing is a process in which the illustrator-subject and city engage reciprocally. In this case, I was collectively claiming space both by practicing yoga in the square and

by drawing it. As I was receiving the information about my surroundings and the inhabitants' practices through my senses (of gravity, balance, distance, direction, speed and duration), I was also documenting them in my sketchbook. My artistic expression changes not only due to different inspirations in space but also due to physical impacts, such as the traces left by rain falling on my illustration. Thus, this dynamic develops the metaphorical illustrative practice from my subjective approach and from the impact of space.

The uses of daily life and spatial stories, as well as my own practice of drawing in situ, are part of a metaphorical city that creates urban space. The illustrations, as result of this process, are testimonies to those practices that diverge from the official urban grid. Unlike *The Soft Atlas*, which will be discussed in the next section, my practice is not geographically bound to the pictorial grid. Instead, it focuses on non-sequential stills of space that allow me to make sense of and to take part in the immediate city that surrounds me. As I will show through the unpacking of the *The Soft Atlas of Amsterdam*, hybrid city illustration comes together in the communication of the cultural practices of the city, making them visible and emphasizing the appropriations and claims of its dwellers (including the illustrator) in urban space. It puts them on the map, shadowing the strictness of the pictorial grid and using it for alternative purposes.

2. Illustrated city, in and off the grid

As mentioned in the previous section, while walking through geographical place, the body inscribes a path in the environment, outlining different meshes of trajectories that create space and that tie together movement, experience and spatial stories: metaphors. Similarly, drawing is an inherently physical act involving the coordination between different parts of the body. As shown earlier in my own artistic practice, when drawing in situ I use the active qualities of walking to be aware of my surroundings and of drawing to be immersed in them and to claim the urban grid as my own.

The case study I am presenting in this section, *The Soft Atlas of Amsterdam*, not only presents an embodied, idiosyncratic urban perspective, but also documents the illustrator's process within the illustrations themselves. Here, unlike in my own drawings, Rothuizen builds his illustrations from a gridded, geographical perspective, while also defying the urban grid by recording his own practice within it. As a result, by creating and claiming space as his own in his embodied experience, the artist simultaneously breaks, distorts, and ignores the corresponding pictorial grid in his illustrations, according to his appropriation and interpretation of the urban grid. Rothuizen's illustrations shadow — or closely follow — the aesthetic expression of his mobile practices within the city, via a topographical representation. The specific, map-like features of his

illustrations are combined with iconographic and symbolic figures to communicate urban meaning and to subvert traditional mapping.

In the *Soft Atlas*, Rothuizen explains that repetition and habit make what is familiar seem invisible and how this, in turn, may affect our perception of space. Realizing that the Amsterdam he knew was limited by his immediate experience of family and daily-life, the artist decided to walk through certain routes (old and new) with a different mindset and, thus, to create new experiences in the city he thought he knew so well. The specific routes created by walking and meeting people are described by the artist as “written maps or graphic reportages” (Rothuizen 9), highlighting his desire to gain a new perspective on the city through what he observes. The book is a hybrid, non-sequential picture book that combines illustrated axonometric maps with sketchbook pages. The illustrations have as a starting point the urban grid, but the artist focuses on urban metaphors — *soft* experiences — rather than on the physicality of place.

Recalling Rothuizen's quote in the epigraph to Section 1, *Soft Atlas* is a word play contrasting the hard, physical aspect of cities with the soft side of the subjective experience of city dwellers. The book, faithful to its title, showcases several embodied experiences in the city of Amsterdam (9). The result is a combination of a general subjective perspective on the artist's practice

with specific fragments in a synthesis of his interpretation of urban space. His illustrative practice not only focuses on the relation between the metaphors and the urban grid of the city of Amsterdam (activities, stories, icons and symbols) but also transposes the pictorial grid by documenting his own practice. While his movements in space are not clearly defined, the reader gets a sense of the time when the artist indicates the start and end of his practice, and his encounters with certain people or places (fig. 3). The notation of the walking route is spread geographically through the illustration, emphasizing the relationship between his temporal embodiment and space. Rather than just focusing on the drawing of his route through the urban grid – the line that de Certeau critiques as missing the action (97) — the artist conveys his situatedness through small details such as the time or bodily sensations — occasionally even by drawing himself.

It is implied in the book that these final illustrations were drawn in situ, and — besides Rothuizen’s metaphorical practices — there is also reference to other inhabitants’ own spatial stories. Therefore, I understand that his illustrations were created on site and directly impacted by the metaphors in space during their creation. In certain illustrations, such as sketchbook spread “Air Traffic Control” (22-23), space is observed directly through the eyes of the artist, much like my own illustrative practice in Section 1.

While these illustrations are the results of the practice of the illustrator, they are not documentations of the metaphorical practice itself. By contrast, Rothuizen’s drawings map the presence and mobility of the artist. The axonometric bird eye’s view perspective of Rothuizen’s map-like illustrations show the city at a distance in order to place it geographically and to establish a wide shot of urban space, meaning that these were not completely drawn from observation but also from his imaginary and memory. Nonetheless, while these illustrations are put at a distance, this is not a totalizing view of the city because the geometric, pictorial grid is overshadowed by other layers of information in different scales that highlight embodied experiences instead.

Rothuizen’s illustrations document his metaphorical appropriation of the city of Amsterdam. Not confined to the boundaries of the pictorial grid, the illustrations go through and under buildings, showcasing what lies beyond walls and different layers. More concretely, they encourage a different kind of city exploration: a path that intersects the invisible trajectories of metaphorical practices that create space. This type of exploring can lead to unexpected situations, due to the liberty each dweller has in appropriating the urban grid. Consequently, it changes the perception from an absolute grid to something constantly in motion. The movement created in these practices shifts the

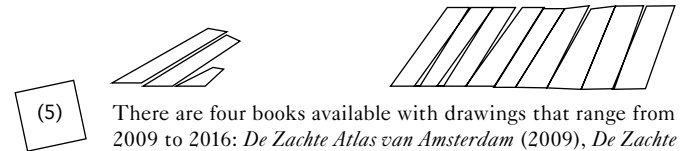
focus onto the questions that a city formulates rather than the ones it answers.

In Rothuizen's work, the illustrations are a combination of multiple elements: drawings and words, past and present, autobiographic memory, historical knowledge, and political urban commentary. It is interesting to pair the almost chaotic illustrations of the *Soft Atlas* — hard to read and disorienting in spatial terms — to the experience of walking in the city of Amsterdam. In my perspective, and following my experience in Amsterdam as a foreigner, this choice of composition mirrors the series of simultaneous events and lives that compose the city, rather than being a simple aesthetic decision. In stark contrast to traditional maps and in advertised map-like images of the city of Amsterdam — in which the prominent factors are the physical, built architectural objects — the pictorial grid in Rothuizen's illustrations is put in the shadows by the lived experience of urban space; in certain illustrations it even appears broken or completely non-existent (fig.4).

The incredibly detailed illustrations derive from Rothuizen's interaction with space and with others, creating spatial encounters and stories that become permanently registered by his practice. Through these encounters, urban space is created and modified. Tim Ingold critiques map-making as a cartographic illusion: “the assumption that the structure of the world, and so also that of the map which purports to represent

it, is fixed without regard to the movement of its inhabitants [... the map] appears deserted, devoid of life” (234). The documentation of metaphorical practices, as shown in Rothuizen's work, aims to produce a different plane in the representation of the city. His illustrations defy the pictorial grid to claim these inhabitants' movements as important parts of the city's complexity.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight two points about *The Soft Atlas of Amsterdam*. First, the illustrations are infused with reflections about urban space as it was at the moment the artist worked there.⁽⁵⁾ This means that the illustration is not only the result of Rothuizen's illustrative practice but also documents this practice; doing so it is seen as a testimony of that particular interactive moment. The fact that Rothuizen's illustrations give visibility to his own immediate perception of the urban grid reaffirms his drawing in situ practice as a tactic of resistance. In addition, by distorting, breaking, overlaying and altering the pictorial grid in his topographical, map-like illustrations,



(5)

There are four books available with drawings that range from 2009 to 2016: *De Zachte Atlas van Amsterdam* (2009), *De Zachte Atlas van Nederland* (2011); *Veranderstad Amsterdam: De Zachte Atlas II* (2017); and *The Soft Atlas of Amsterdam* (2014). The latter is the only book in English and gathers a selection of illustrations from the first two books.

he accentuates certain sensations produced by urban space. In this sense, he disregards the traditional totalizing view of the urban grid, overshadowing it by following the metaphorical practices and stories that occur in urban space. When giving visibility to the metaphorical practices of the city of Amsterdam, Rothuizen's illustrations emphasize his appropriations and claims of the urban grid which might bring out meaning and identification (or a lack thereof) to its inhabitants.

Second, I suggest that these city illustrations shift the attention from the traditional constructs of the pictorial grid that is assumed to geographically guide and clarify space. By focusing on the sayings, stories and interactions of the artist, the illustrations expand the scope of the representation and expression of urban space by documenting Rothuizen's illustrative practice. Reflections such as these highlight the constant movement, stories and practices that create and represent urban knowledge, disregarding the urban grid as a stable, physical entity. Metaphorical practices, including drawing in situ, create space by appropriating place, and their results give way to hybrid illustrations that reflect on these practices.

Conclusion

I started this article by asking how we breathe life into a map, arguing that the acts of walking and of drawing in

the city are not reducible to the urban planner's mapping logic. In the case of drawing in situ, the practices may even be even considered as tactics of resistance to the urban grid by making important contributions to the creation of qualitative knowledge and urban imaginaries of the city. This analysis claims that human experience in the city is that of a body in motion through an ever-changing environment and its resulting interactions. These experiences are described by de Certeau as examples of metaphors; they carry in them moments of everyday life, trajectories and spatial stories that are active elements in the resistance and appropriation of the urban grid by creating unique uses of and perspectives on space (115). Moreover, the process of capturing urban space in illustration highlights this embodiment through the artist's expression, revealing the lines of spatial stories as expressive movements full of social and cultural significance and intention.

Throughout this paper, I have highlighted the similarities of walking and drawing, particularly as combined practices: drawing in situ. I began by discussing my own artistic practice, in order to show how the artist can be immersed, creating space through metaphorical practice. Building on de Certeau's writings, I emphasized the productive interactions between both practices as embodied performances that transform the signifiers of space and shed light on the paths and movements otherwise invisible in its pictorial grid

— revealing the appropriation of space through the perspective of the artist. My practice of drawing in situ is part of these movements as an active performance in my interaction with urban space, and, consequently, the illustration's focus and expressivity are results of the direct impact of space on my experience.

Rothuizen's written maps or graphical reportages are documentations of his metaphorical practices, as the artist represents himself and the literal path he took rather than just what he perceives. His illustrations contrast the urban grid with how space is used and transformed by its dwellers, and distort its pictorial counterpart according to his subjective experience of space (9). This process, analysed in Rothuizen's illustrations, shows that an illustrated city — by being interpreted and documented through the artist's experience in the concrete city — can ask questions about urban space. More specifically, it reflects on how resisting the official urban grid through walking, observing and drawing is an active source of creative production for urban imaginaries as it interacts with urban space and with others in space. These are creative processes to generate spatial stories that alter our perception of the urban grid — not as something stable, but instead as a space in constant movement. This instability blurs the lines between the illustrator's perception of the urban and pictorial grids by creating unique depictions of the city attending to its complexity at the ground level.

Finally, such illustration can embody a set of careful, specific observations revealing differences in space across time and through shifts in perspective. Thus, like walking, the act of drawing in situ can be used by the artist to reinforce the embodied and temporal nature of spatial experience beyond the urban grid. As shown in the case-studies, these illustrations accentuate the articulation of city fragments to convey the artist's subjective perception of the urban grid. Therefore, they offer versions of the city that do not aspire to a totalizing view, replacing this with a complex multiplicity of open-ended stories and fragmented spatial experiences. In addition, this argument also emphasizes that aesthetic practices are heavily impacted by the urban experience of space and do not only reflect the impositions of the strictly designed urban grid. Instead, they are affected by the combination of the metaphorical and topological layers of the city in which urban space emerges.

biography Tânia A. Cardoso (Lisbon, 1985) is an urbanist and illustrator based in Rotterdam who has had exhibitions in Portugal, the United Kingdom, Brazil and the Netherlands. Her work has been rewarded the Worldwide Picture Book Illustration Competition 2015 and the Gorsedh Kernow Creativity Award 2017. Currently, she is a PhD candidate at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis researching the relationship between illustration and the city.

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