The Validity of a Novel Research Methodology in (urban) Architecture

Creating a Cinecast

Eva Ventura

Delft University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture, Delft, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses a newly discovered (urban) architectural research methodology that balances both the objective and subjective. It shows a novel research methodology, the cinecast methodology, in which a narrated film goes beyond mere representation and enters the process of research and design. The methodology results in and reveals a unique understanding of a place by combining moving image or film, with spoken words (storytelling). It overlays what is seen and felt and what is revealed, paying close attention to the story of a place and its 'softer' information. It allows the researcher/designer to fully understand the place, uncovering a narrative that expresses it and the audience to escape to it. Its objective and subjective conclusions can be further appolied in the design process making it a methodology that hits all marks for (urban) architects.

Keywords: Narrative, observation, architecture, film, cinema, cinecast, subjective, objective, personal, research, genius loci, sense of place

1. Introduction

Design is often seen as personal and subjective, as opposed to research which is factional and objective. The field of architecture combines the two and can be described to be a bridge between art and creativity, and science and measurability (Kieran, 2007). Therefore the distinctions between design and research are not so clear and lines between the two tend to blur. Research is an important part of every design, and is often conducted throughout the entire design process. The way it is conducted however, varies for every project. Due to this fluidity, there is a certain freedom in choosing the tools to most effectively conduct, communicate and visualize a research. The use of drawings, (computer) models, interviews, photographs or position papers in different stages of the design process is fairly common. However more and more tools are added to the architect's toolbox of which film (the moving image), or cinema, is one.
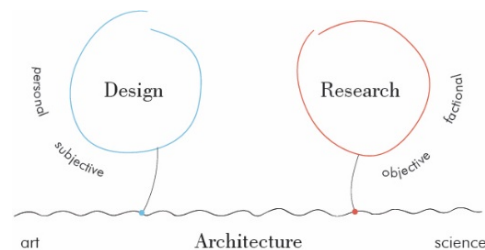

Figure 1: Design, Research and Architecture

Throughout history many have acknowledged that (urban) architecture and film, are closely related. The practice of filming the city and architecture is as old as cinema itself with the very first images of *Place des Cordeliers* by the Lumière brothers screened for an audience in Lyon in 1895 (Penz, 2011). The city has been a long lasting fascination for filmmakers. Driving through Rome on his Vespa, Nanni Moretti, an Italian film director, contemplates the idea of making a film *"just of houses, panning shots of houses"* (Caro Diario, 1993). However the

act of filming is both rewarding for the filmmaker and the filmed environment. '*Le cinema est avant tout un révélateur inépuisable de passages nouveaux'* or 'cinema is primarily an endless revelatory medium of novel passage' (Faure, 1934). The moving image has the ability to reveal new spatial and narrative structure adding to the experience of a city and the architecture within it.

When acknowledging the relation between (urban) architecture and film and how they benefit each other, it only makes sense to experiment the full extent of their symbioses.

In the past, few architects have used film as a tool to understand spaces and urban phenomenon. A good example of someone who did, is planner and designer Kevin Lynch. In his book 'The Image of the City', he used film to record an experience of Boston while in motion, as part of a quest to research cities and their countless layers (Lynch, 1960). This high speed film 'A view from the Road' gave an insight into a specific perception of the city, from the car (Lynch et al, 1964). Also Marc Boumeester explores 'videography's' role in the exploration, registration and understanding of urban environments (Boumeester, 2011). He concluded that besides an understanding of the 'hard' city through maps, statistics and demography, film provides an authorial tool that has the ability to map the 'softer', more imaginary, side of the city.

In these researches, the architects have used film to study and understand cities by adding another, moving, dimension to their spatial studies. With the help of this added dimension, one obtains an understanding of a larger space, a sequence of spaces by moving through multiple layers of understanding. These layers are both physical and spatial but also poetic and psychological, creating a narrative understanding that reads in between the hard lines of what is literally there. An understanding that also stems from perception and feeling, ultimately discovering a place's story.

The application of film in an architectural research is still in its teething years. And perhaps the application of other media genres are also still to be explored. This paper addresses a newly discovered (urban) architectural research methodology that balances both the objective and subjective. It shows a novel research methodology in which a narrated film goes beyond mere representation and enters the process of research and design. It regards film as a tool rather than a medium. The methodology results in and reveals a unique understanding of a place by combining moving image or film, with spoken words (storytelling). It overlays what is seen and what is felt, allowing the designer to fully understand the place, and the audience to escape to it, creating a new media genre, the *'cinecast'*.

2. Cinecast

2.1 What is a 'cinecast'?

Within the realm of film (moving image), many categories exist, to name a few; fictional film, animations, film adaptations of books, short films, music videos, documentaries, etc. Filmmakers or film hobbyists succeed to come up with new combinations of existing types creating compelling new categories, which is precisely how the cinecast was invented.

However a cinecast doesn't only combine types of film, it stretches to a realm that has a narrative character like film, the podcast. As if reading a book, audio recorded stories have the power to immerse and subdue its listeners. The words and sounds combined with imagination remove the listeners from their own rational and place them into the described world. In podcasts, the described worlds swing between fictional or non-fictional. Some contain interviews with important people, or dive into societal wrongdoings, others solve crimes, or philosophize about life. Podcasts can be educational, but also unwinding and its narratives can be spontaneous or curated. In whichever way, their ability to captivate the audience is indisputable.

"Like any worthwhile new technology, podcasting breaks all the rules. Can you make a podcast about retro kitchen appliances? Sure. Can it be a minute long? Of course. Can it be an hour long? If you'd like. Can it be in slang? Uh-huh" (Geoghegan and Klass, 2005). So can it be part of an architectural research? Why not! Generally, architectural representation in podcasts is rare. In the Netherlands the first architecture themed podcast came out in 2019. 'Windoog' tells the individual stories of buildings revealing facts and fictions hidden in contemporary architecture (Ronner and Mandias, 2019). The bridge between architectural research and podcasting however, is yet to be built.

So simply put, a cinecast is a podcast with moving images. The word 'cinecast' is a fusion of 'cinema' and 'podcast'. The genre combines two immersive media that are capable of copiously communicate rich stories, making it perfectly cut out for (urban) architectural research.
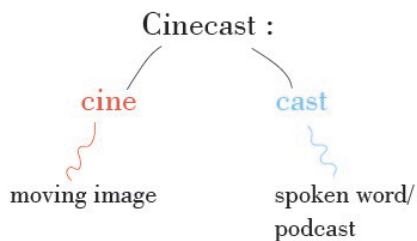

Figure 2: Definition Cinecast

3.Creation

The way a cinecast is created can be divided into three phases: shooting, reviewing, and editing. Each phase contributes to architectural research its own way. This chapter will explain the steps taken in order to create a cinecast that becomes a research tool rather than merely a medium. It talks specifically about the methodology applied to research Coney Island in New York.

3.1 Shooting

In most film categories the shooting of footage is deliberate and premeditated in extensive storyboards and scripts. Yet, when doing research on a place, big or small scale, it is important to let the place itself be the director of the story. To let the place take the lead, the researcher/filmmaker has to remain in the background and function as an instrument of attention and *observation* at the same time as being a participant of the space. It is required of the researcher to have a passive but attentive and active attitude. Only then, the essence of a place and all its layers can be revealed without contamination.

In creating a cinecast, the *passive* attitude is realized in the manner of shooting the film footage of the cinecast and the tools utilized. Instead of pointing a camera in deliberate directions, framing portions and leaving out others, the cinecast uses a *360 camera* (the 'Insta 360 Evo) mounted on a selfiestick. The camera has the ability to shoot a 360 image, capturing more than even the human eye can at every instance. The lens is unframed and captures all around. It records continuously without interruption, allowing the researcher to be unworried about capturing enough. The selfiestick helps distancing the researcher from the recording making the recorded footage impersonal, which is a crucial part in capturing initially untainted and uncurated footage.

Figure 3: Phases cinecast creation

However, one cannot fully grasp a place's story by completely erasing oneself from the scenery. After all as a visitor, one is also a participant and contributor to the place's *narrative*. As Lynch mentioned: *"we are not simply observers in the spectacle of the city, but we are ourselves part of it, on the stage with the other participants"* (Lynch,

1960). In often cases for a researcher, it is important to make observations which are assessed with a critical but, as far as possible, non biased eye. However just like one cannot be completely removed from a place, one can also not be completely removed from its own personal, perception or bias. Within architectural research the trick lies in balancing both sides of the scale allowing personal opinion and perception to enter the process.

When visiting a place for the first time, one's opinion about it is as unpolluted and pure as it can be. For the cinecast these first impressions are recorded *actively* though *audio*. Using a smartphone's *voice recording app*, observations, opinions, feelings and thoughts are reported live. Like writing a diary these observations are personal and represent an individual experience. But they can also be objective by simply describing what is seen. Reporting live in audio produces a certain connection to the place. In driving a spoken word description of what is seen, the researcher's opinions don't just exist in the mind separate from the scenery, but become situated and embedded in the context. Using words to express, within the limits of language, gives the flexibility and freedom to describe a place and all its faces. Spoken words are not confined to lines or borders like on maps, but appeal to the experience on hand and even beyond, in imagination.

Besides the 360 camera, and the voice app, also a GoPro is used. In this case the *GoPro*, like the 360 camera, shoots footage passively. Within the frame of the lens, the footage is unfiltered and true. However unlike the 360 camera, the GoPro is mounted at eye level. This technique connects the impersonal 360 footage to the personal audio recording. The GoPro captures the way the researcher
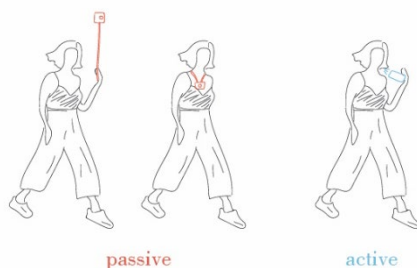
Figure 4: Passive and active act

moves through the scenery. It captures decisions that were made and frames what was seen during observations.

So to capture a place's essence seeing through a multiplicity of layers by shooting a cinecast, a researcher records it both passively (360 camera and GoPro) and actively (voice recording). By using the three recording devices and applying them with fitting techniques, the researcher is able to be both an actor directed by the place and a researcher observing it.

3.2 Reviewing

After the site is visited and the shooting is a wrap, the footage is reviewed. In this phase key insights are collected, grouped, ordered and finally linked into a script. The footage is pulled apart then shuffled and filtered, and finally glued back together. The research diverges and converges until a specific narrative that tells the research's conclusion, the story of the place, remains.
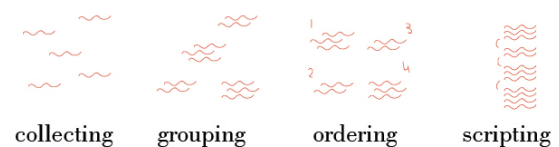

collecting   grouping   ordering   scripting

Figure 5: Phases of reviewing

Collecting: The material from the 360 camera, the GoPro and the audio recording is revised in its entirety. The moving image and the audio recording is played simultaneously and chronologically. The footage is not transcribed but the researcher closely notes down key moments and compelling observations. Close attention is paid to the origins of the observations. What were the grounds of the remarks made live, on site? For example the observation that *"the ending of the boardwalk is very abrupt"* (me in live audio recording). The film footage shows that the boardwalk doesn't fade out but is cut of with a fence and a height difference. Thus, for each remark, the associated footage is noted

down as well (the timestamp on the audio or film footage). Initially the notes seem unconnected but when the collection gets close to completion, key insights and hints of research conclusions reveal itself.

Figure5: Still from cinecast - Abrupt end of boardwalk

Grouping: When reviewing is done, the notes are evaluated. Following the emerging patterns, remarks and insights that validate each other, are grouped together. For example *"on the boardwalk the parks are in the background and the sea takes the stage"* and *"from the pier, the rides disappear against the buildings in the background"* (me in live audio recording). These notes both talk about a certain shyness of the place, hiding in the background, so they are grouped together. The groups however are still segregated and don't tell a story yet.

Ordering: To tell the story, the groups are ordered, connected and placed in a desired chronology. As the key insights are already clear, this phase aims to create the best chronology to tell the story of the researches place, of Coney Island. The goal is to create a (curated) story containing key insights that undeniably, lead up to the researchers conclusions. In order to tell Coney Island's story, a *narrative text* is written. The groups recognized in the grouping phase are essentially pulled apart again and scattered throughout the storyline. This way each part of the story contains observations that collectively lead to the conclusions. The narrative text speaks to the audience's imagination by choosing a poetic and lyrical vocabulary. The sentences flow when read out loud and the atmosphere created resembles what was experienced on site. The narrative text functions as

leading directive when selecting the suitable images and audio in the scripting phase.

Scripting: After pulling the footage apart and back together multiple times, this phase superglues the narrative text and the recorded audio together. It completes the narrative and selects the audio footage that expresses it.

The script is written using the narrative text as backbone. In it, the narrative text is enriched and validated by alternating portions of it with snippets of the live audio recording. This way the live recordings support and corroborate with the constructed narrative creating a comprehensive and communicable perspective on the experience of the researched place.
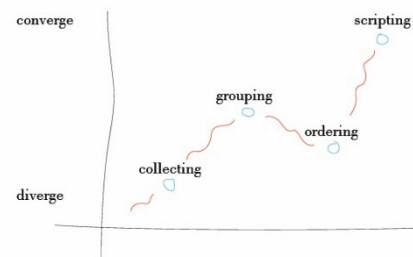

Figure 6: Converging and diverging

3.3 Editing

The editing, is the final touch. After the script is completed on paper, the editing brings it to life. The editing makes the selection of footage that is put in a chronology, readable and legible. Transitions are smoothened and different types of footages are characterized.

To create a continuous flow to this cinecast, the narrative text is transformed into a voice over like in a podcast. The voice over alternates the live voice. Therefore in the editing, the voice over is made distinguishable from the live voice recorded on site. It is recorded in a controlled setting and spoken with a calm tone and demeanor. It doesn't have background sounds and no sighs or hesitations. The live voice, recorded on site however, doesn't loose its

roughness in the editing. The audio is not smoothened out and background noises remain. The live audio and voice over complement each other. The live audio shares observation with the audience and the voice over takes a step back to consider the meaning of that observation. This completes the cycle of discovery to understanding for both the audience and the researcher.

The addition of the film footage follows after the audio is edited together. At this stage, close attention is paid to what image fits the words spoken. It is of utter importance that the words are leading and the images are not in conflict with them, but strengthen them. This means that often, the footage that fits seamlessly to the words, is not what was seen at the instance the words were said. Sometimes while experiencing a place, a feeling or observation results from a sequence of other moments even though only expressed in one of them. *"Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings, in sequence of events leading up to it"* (Lynch 1960). Thus, for the cinecast, the expressed feelings and observations are often better depicted not by the live imagery, but by an at hindsight selected sequence of others.

The 360 and the GoPro footage is used alternately wherever they fit best. A balance is sought in having the types of footage equally as present during the cinecast. In the editing, the color of both types of footages is matched in order to create a unified flow of images. In a special program (Insta360 Studio 2019) for the 360 footage, paths of 'camera movement' are chosen that fit the words. The movement of the camera is smooth and the position often higher than human eye-level, sometimes even as if seeing the place from space. This, like the voice over, gives the audience a break, stepping outside itself and contemplating the place. The GoPro footage however is at eye-level and shaky (as if walking), immersing the audience into what the researcher experienced as if one was there, on site. As cherry on top, background music, subtitles and credits are added.

When the editing is completed, the cinecast is ready to be screened!

Figure 7: Still from cinecast - Planet view

4. Application

As mentioned before, when open to them, there are boundless ways of conducting research or inquiry on an aspect of the built environment. New realms of research foci wane into foreign contexts, like the exploration of digital technologies (Groat and Wang, 2013). However every research must meet certain standards in order to be valid.

There are three vital aspects of the cinecast methodology that substantiate the method's worth: the order of steps taken, the tools and the devices used, and the application of the finished cinecast. By Groat and Wang's description, a research contains both a strategy and tactics. They refer to strategy as
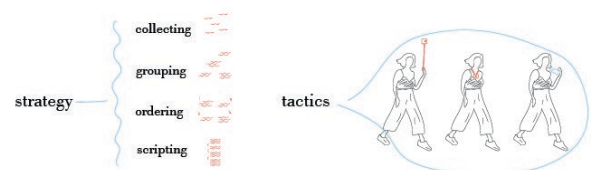

Figure 8: Strategy and tactics

"the overall research plan or structure of the research study" whereas tactics are a *"more detailed deployment of specific techniques, such as data collection devices, archival treatment, analytical procedures, and so on"* (Groat and Wang, 2013). In the case of the cinecast, the order of steps taken or the procedure of creating the cinecast is the strategy. The tactics are the tools and devices used.

4.1 The strategy

For research to be research, it necessarily involves reducing lived experience or observed phenomena to chunks of information that are noted and categorized in some way (Groat and Wang, 2013). The cinecast's strategy of reduction lies in the sequence of collecting, grouping, ordering and editing of on-site observations. Within the specific chronology of steps taken lie key aspects that validate the research as (urban) architectural.
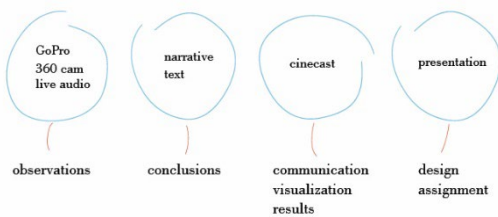

Figure 9: Research strategy

Generally in filmmaking, one predetermines how the film is shot, in a storyboard. The storyboard outlines the movement of the camera and the framing of scenes. It determines a sequence of scenes in order to tell a predetermined narrative. In a research with the objective of finding a place's narrative, or as Lynch calls it, a place's *image*, the place ought to be the director (Lynch, 1960). Therefore the strategy for a cinecast is to capture what the place is showing. Only after going through a process of selecting, grouping and ordering and the narrative is extracted from the footage, the editing serves a more directive purpose of communicating that narrative.

However the research doesn't stop when the editing begins. As mentioned earlier, in a cinecast filmmaking, including the editing, is also a research tool. In the ordering phase, the leading narrative is determined. This narrative concludes part of the research in finding the image or story of the place. The second part mostly starts while editing, the question of what at the place, constituted this story. Due to the fact that the cinecast lays out its script with just audio, like a podcast, the film footage is selected based on the words in the written narrative. A

selective eye is required in picking footage that is not in conflict with the words, but embodies them. Consequently, extra attention is given to which lines or objects in the scenery, which sequence of spaces or which occurrences at the place produced the recorded observations now embedded in a scripted narrative.

4.2 The tools - tactics

The tactics applied in this methodology support the strategy. The tools and devices utilized, contribute to the symbioses of (urban) architectural research and film and consequentially in birth of a new genre the cinecast. The capabilities of the 360 camera, the GoPro and the high quality voice recording of a smartphone app, alongside with the techniques used to operate them (actively and passively) form a foundation for an (urban) architectural research.
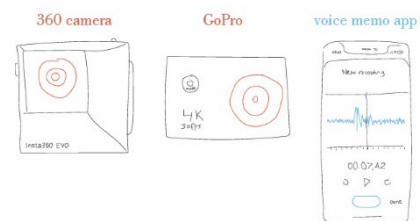

Figure 10: Capturing devices

With technology evolving and the digital world expanding anyone who has a phone and a laptop can contribute to the land of film. An example of a newer category of film is 'vlogging'. The live hand- (or selfiestick) held recording is like a real life Dogma95 film (a Dogma95 film is a film that is constricted by a set of rules so the audience can perceive it through the eyes of a participant of the fictive story) (Jerslev, 2002). Vlogs usually don't follow predetermined scripts or storyboards. The camera movement is not predetermined and merely follows the maker. The role of the camera is just to capture and not to lead in the narrative. As mentioned earlier, the film footage shot for the cinecast is shot passively. The 360 camera is mounted on a selfie stick and is continuously recording, detached from the researcher's conscious. The GoPro, also recording passively is mounted on eyesight framing the researchers view on the scenery. The live audio

recording however, is an active act of describing and expressing what is seen and felt on location. The combination of these three techniques, passively and actively recording, forms a comprehensive whole that includes both impersonal and personal information.
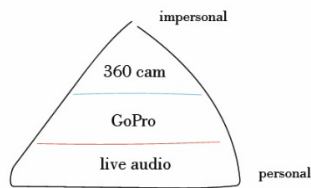

Figure 11: Personal and impersonal involvement of devices

4.3 Addition to the field of (urban) architecture

The notion of knowledge creation is frequently cited as characteristic of the research endeavor (Groat and Wang, 2013). There are many ways to discover the key notions of a place in an (urban) architectural research. History books, documentaries, maps and other data are a good starting point. However, a place's story isn't complete when it is reduced to its foundation or skeleton. A description of a person could also not be reduced to 'cells, legs, arms, daughter or brother of'. It's also the necklace she wore when she was 12 and then switched to wearing rings. Or his joke that made everybody laugh except him because he got embarrassed. It's the songs sang in the shower when nobody is around or someone's complete inability to draw between the lines. Narratives are rich and don't exist merely of patterns, that can be recognized by anyone. They are also formed by defining moments, high or low. Characteristics of people are rich and complex, just like those of a place. The richness of a place is difficult to capture as it changes faces constantly. *"On different occasions and for different people, the sequences of experiences are reversed, interrupted, abandoned or cut across"* (Lynch, 1960). A place is many things at the same time, as Sijmons mentioned *"a landscape can be seen as an object, organization and a story"* (Sijmons, 2002).

As (urban) architects design something in a situation that already exists, they have a responsibility not to obliterate by superimposing. So as not to cause undue damage to the existing, the (urban) architect must understand it comprehensively. Understanding places requires care and an order of attention that is sensitive and humble. In the lecture 'The Matter of Attention' for the Fundamentals – Interiors course at TU Delft, Mark Pimlott spoke about the difference between 'looking' and 'seeing'. He explains how seeing is passive and objective and looking is conscious and demands engagement. He calls this engagement 'attention' (Pimlott, personal communication, November, 2018). By looking, paying attention and carefully observing, we can come to understand the situation, the circumstances and the context of a place. By 'seeing' at the same time as 'looking' we discover narratives that compose a place's essence.

There are multiple ways to describe a place's essence. Some call it a genius loci which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as: "*the prevailing character or atmosphere of a place*", and Nikolaus Pevsner as "*the character of the site, not only the geographical but also historical, social, and especially the aesthetic aspect*" (de Wit, 2013). It can also be described as a sense of place, the concept of a place or its identity (Piccinini and van der Velde, 2017). But its also related to perception, and experience. However what is clear is that as (urban) architects, we aim to find this 'essence', and when we look, are engaged and pay attention, we can get to it.

Not all research strategies do however. Therefore the cinecast methodology becomes a valuable addition to the field. It inquires and pays attentions to allow the subject, Coney Island, to appear. As mentioned before, the cinecast combines a passive and active research method, both seeing and looking. In the process of making the cinecast the researcher inquires objectively, pays attention to the place, and engages oneself in its narrative. The cinecast methodology shows a method that has the ability to extract this more sensitive or as Boumeester called it 'soft' sense of a place, that doesn't reveal itself in traditional and

more conventional methodologies (Boumeester, 2011).

4.4 Coney Island research

Proof of this can be acknowledged in the research's key insights. Coney Island is place that has been elaborately and thoroughly researched by others. It has been described as: *"a fantastic city of fire that suddenly rises from the ocean into the sky"* (Gorky, 1907) or, also by Gorky, as a hell that is *'very badly done"*. William Henry Bishop described Coney Island as (in his time): *"the greatest resort for a single day's pleasure in the world"* and Rem Koolhaas as *"an instrument of mass exhilaration"* (Koolhaas, 1978). José Martí looked at the amusement area as *"a product of a nation dominated by the eagerness to possess wealth"* (Martí, 1881). Researching the changing perspectives throughout history shows how Coney Island has stood for different things during different periods and *"at times meant all things to all men"* (Pilat and Ranson, 1941). It is according to the Parascandola brothers, a *"palimpsest that is open to individual analyses, lending itself to a variety of interpretations"* (Parascandolas, 2014). It is evident that Coney Island is a relic that stood through time as place to escape to but also a chimera that showed many different heads. However, to design for Coney Island, one needs to understand its current narrative.

By reviewing online footage of the amusement park, one gets the impression of a fervent and energetic place that is full of excitement and absurd pleasure. It doesn't seem like the place ever sleeps or the fun ever stops. During the process of making the cinecast however, the place showed another, unexpected face. The face of shyness and intimacy. It was found out upon arrival that the parks were closed due to cold weather. Disappointment was an initial reaction but pressing on with the creation of the cinecast revealed a valuable narrative. One of the insights found was the fact that the bombastic and colorful shapes of the amusement parks are not always dominant. While walking onto the Steeplechase pier, creating distance between the parks and the researcher, the live report expressed a sense of shyness and humbleness in the previously pompous seeming parks. Similarly walking over the boardwalk and in between the fenced off parks, a sense of intimacy was felt. The researcher didn't have to lead the search but simply had to pay attention as Coney Island was showing its more vulnerable, intimate side. By not being concerned with capturing specific moments, and instead capturing all moments, these insights were allowed to unfold itself. Moreover, they didn't just unfold, but they were noticed and reported on live, as they appeared.
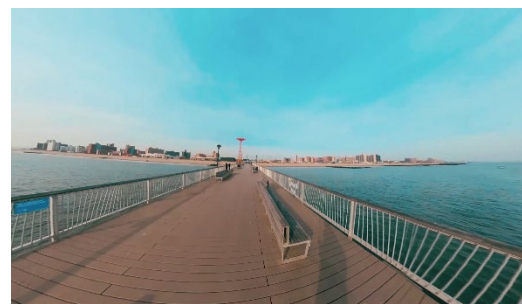

Figure 12: Still from cinecast – Shy parks on pier view

Figure 13: Still from cinecast - Intimate atmosphere

4.5 Cinecast methodology positioning

So in a range of research types where does the cinecast methodology fit? In an objectivist research position, typically seen in natural and human sciences, the methodological emphasis lies upon how to maximize validity, by minimizing the influence of the researcher and by randomized sampling (Deming and Swaffield, 2011). The subjectivist position is associated with the fine arts, humanities and social disciplines in which the immersion of the researcher in the systems of creating new knowledge and new realities is 'recognized and celebrated'. In their book 'Landscape Architectural Research: inquiry, strategy, design', Deming and Swaffield expand these two

positions creating an area of transitional strategies to illustrate that landscape architectural research balances the two sides (Deming and Swaffield, 2011). The cinecast, is an example of a methodology that belongs in this middle area. The area in which the researcher is both impartial to the new knowledge and participant in it.

4.6 Design application

The application of the cinecast methodology doesn't end with the research but continues in the design process. By evaluating and presenting the cinecast, the notions that encompassed the found narrative are extracted. In the evaluation of the specific Coney Island cinecast, it was found that five themes reoccurred throughout the cinecast. These themes become indisputable and undeniable after seeing the cinecast. The themes form the basis of a design assignment and perhaps continue to be guiding in the design process itself. The five themes: escape, energy, relic, chimera and intimacy can form a leading role in designing architecture that does not obliterate, but enhance. The spatial qualities that created this narrative can be revisited in the finished cinecast and used as starting principles for a design.

The methodology affords for a transformation from researching and looking to making. By paying attention when making the cinecast, one is conscious about the condition one is working in which in turn affords for imagination. Reading and interpreting 'what is there' the way the cinecast methodology does, prepares and sensitizes the (urban) architect for what can be added or changed, removing the chance of obliteration. As Mark Pimlott said during his lecture: *"this attitude* [the matter of attention] *will serve the architect well throughout the process of making. Every act will occur within this context, a context that is more than a set of statistics or a catalogue of surfaces and spaces, but a charged space of relations"* (Pimlott, personal communication, November, 2018).
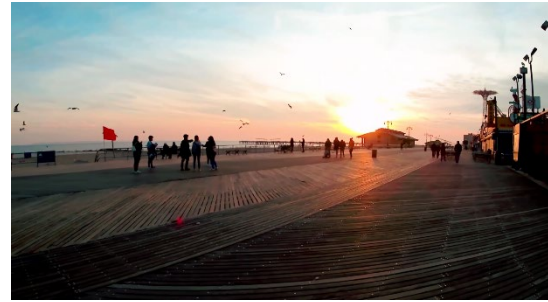

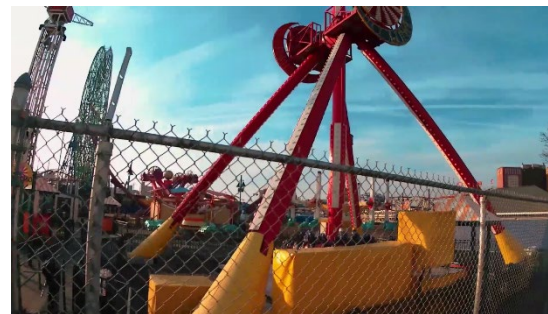*Figure 14: Still from cinecast - Intimate atmosphere on boardwalk*

Figure 15: Still from cinecast - Energetic shapes

5. Conclusion

This paper started by explaining how design is often seen as personal and subjective, as opposed to research which is factional and objective. The field of architecture combines the two and can be described to be a bridge between art and creativity, and science and measurability (Kieran, 2007). When designing a research methodology to research any aspect of the built environment, it is therefore apparent to allow the method itself to balance the two sides as well. Without concern of invalidity, the methodology designed should be personal and individual. It should afford a process that holds hands with both the objective and subjective and it should allow the researcher to be participant in the research's results.

The research is a humble one, that pays attention to what the place unfolds. It uncovers the genius loci, or sense of place and represents it in a narrative. As (urban) architects have the responsibility to not obliterate when designing for an existing setting, a special matter of attention should be paid to the

subject being researched. The cinecast methodology fulfills this task by balancing the personal and impersonal, the objective and subjective, the observing and the participating and the seeing and looking.

The tactics of this research encompass the using of film not merely as communicative medium but also as research tool, and addition of an audio recorded narrative to the storyline. The combination results in the cinecast's success in revealing a place's richness. The passive film recording allows the researcher to be objective, to see, and the active audio reporting allows the researcher to pay attention and participate, the latter being subjective but conscious. When the obtained information and observations are further reduced in the methodology's strategy of collecting, grouping, ordering and editing, a narrative that is released by the place but noticed by the researcher is created.

Finding a methodology that creates a narrative that expresses both the place and the researcher/designer designing for it is valuable. It shows how novel research methods can be extremely valid. Not 'even though' they are personalized, but especially when they *are*.

The cinecast methodology isn't only effective in its research conduction but also immersively communicates and amply visualizes its results. Its conclusions and insights can be further applied in the design process making it a methodology that hits all marks for (urban) architects. The invention of the cinecast methodology shows an example of how novel research can be a valuable addition to the (urban) achitect's toolbox and is hopefully an inspiration for many alike to come.

6. Discussion

When arguing that the subjective and personal is also valid in a research, it is important to be aware of the role of the researcher. Even though in the field of (urban) architecture, the subjective and the objective

often meet, it is important to be aware of the specific researcher's frame of reference. As mentioned earlier, in an objectivist research, the methodological emphasis lies upon how to maximize validity, by minimizing the influence of the researcher and by randomized sampling. In that case, the researcher's frame of reference plays few to no part. However in a subjectivist position, the immersion of the researcher in the systems of creating new knowledge and new realities is 'recognized and celebrated'. Consequently, as opposed to objectivist research, a subjectivist research doesn't always have the same outcome when conducted by different researchers.

The cinecast methodology isn't designed to have the same exact outcome for every researcher. The outcome is a narrative revealed by the place, but noticed by the researcher. The place probably has many additional narratives that would be noticed by other researchers. The researcher's past, talents, background, interests and knowledge therefore influence methodology's results. Architects pay attention to landmarks, nodes, lines in the space, transitions, etc. While civil engineers might pay more attention to the rollercoaster structures. The range of perspectives and interpretations researchers enter the research with is something to be aware of when evaluating the results.

In the Coney Island research, the outcomes were colored by landscape and architectural points of view. Transitions in atmospheres and flows in the landscape were noticed but less attention was paid to for example the animals in the area. This doesn't make the research invalid or incomplete. However one has to be aware of it. The narrative that is uncovered is part of the genius loci or the sense of place, in that moment of time, but one should also reserve some room for additional and/or alternative stories.

However, one could argue that for (urban) architects the personal engagement in the narrative is not disruptive but supports the further design process. When designing for the existing, like (urban)

architects do, the personal investment in the research plays a critical role. Design choices will be more grounded and situated in the place's context. They will come from an outsider, but from an insider, someone that was part of the place's narrative and therefore the outcomes of the research. This attitude in the design process will afford a more sensitive design that doesn't unsettle the existing.

That being said, the cinecast is most compelling when its embraced by additional studies in literature/history or data and mapping analysis for example. The cinecast methodology shouldn't be seen as a universal research strategy but instead fills up the essential 'softer' parts that traditional research leaves out. Especially for (urban) architects the filling up of those holes is vital.

So the methodology is repeatable for other fields of research. Yet, in order to uncover the desired results for specific fields, it has to be made sure the researcher pays notice with an attentive attitude to certain aspects. In prepping a specific but not limiting frame of reference, the researcher's eyes can be opened in order to fulfill an critical and attentive attitude. Then the cinecast methodology's full potential can be copiously depleted in a multiplicity of fields.

Figure 15: Stills from cinecast

References

Boumeester, M. (2011). Reconsidering Cinematic Mapping. Halfway Between Collected Subjectivity and Projective Mapping. *Urban Cinematics. Understanding Urban Phenomena through the Moving Image/Eds. F. Penz, A. Lu*

De Wit, S. (2013). *Articulating the Site; the Reflection Garden as a Condensation of the Genius Loci*. Delft

Deming, M. E., & Swaffield, S. (2011). *Landscape architectural research: Inquiry, strategy, design*. John Wiley & Sons.

Diario, C. (1993). Direção: Nanni Moretti.

Faure, E. (1934). *Ombres Solides (Essais d'esthétique concrete)*, Paris; Edgar Malfère

Geoghegan, M. W., & Klass, D. (2005). *Podcast solutions*. Apress.

Gorky, M. (1978). *Boredom*. The Independent, August 8.

Groat, L. N., & Wang, D. (2013). *Architectural research methods*. John Wiley & Sons.

Jerslev, A. (2002). *Dogma 95, Lars von Trier's The Idiots and the "Idiot Project"*. Realism and 'Reality' in Film and Media, 41-65.

Kieran, S. (2007). Research in design: Planning doing monitoring learning. *Journal of Architectural Education*, *61*(1), 27-31.

Koolhaas, R. (2014). *Delirious New York: a retroactive manifesto for Manhattan*. The Monacelli Press, LLC.

Lynch, K. (1960). *The image of the city* (Vol. 11). MIT press.

Lynch, K., Appleyard, D., & Myer, J. R. (1964). *The view from the road* (Vol. 196, No. 3). Cambridge, MA: MIT press.

Parascandola, L. J., & Parascandola, J. (Eds.). (2014). *A Coney Island Reader: Through Dizzy Gates of Illusion*. Columbia University Press.

Penz, F., & Lu, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Urban cinematics: Understanding urban phenomena through the moving image*. Intellect Books.

Piccinini, D., & van der Velde, R. (2017). *IOPM 2017 – PIN(K) A PLACE: Result Elective – Landscape Architecture ON site, being part of Oerol 2017*. Delft University of Technology.

Pilat, O., & Ranson, J. (1941). *Sodom by the Sea: An Affectionate History of Coney Island*. NY.

Ronner, E., Mandias, S. (2019). *Windoog (podcast)*

Sijmons, D. (2002). *Landkaartmos*, Rotterdam