

Every day I leave my residence at workspacebrussels and walk through my neighborhood in Brussels: Anderlecht, Moulenbeck, Danseart. I talk to people on the sidewalks and invite them to walk with me, hand in hand. Some don't have time, others ask, and I make appointments with some.

We meet at the front door of my residence. After greeting each other, we put a large sticker on each other's backs, which we wear during the walk, and which names the performance: "hand in hand with you - whom I don't know yet".

*Then we stand next to each other. I offer you my hand. You put yours in mine.*

*Our walk begins. We walk slowly, in silence. Our hands communicate. I understand quite well where you want to go. I just follow and let myself be surprised. We walk without a destination. I rarely walk through the city like this.*

*It's warm. Our hands, clasped together, sweat. The humidity makes our holding hands even more intimate. An exchange of fluids. I associate it with sex.*

*Suddenly I realize how the immediate physical connection creates a feeling of dependency in me. Where I go is no longer my decision. I want to walk in the shadows. I hope you do, too.*

*We walk along streets, then through a park, past other people. We are seen. We see the others. It makes a difference how we are out and about in public. If we walk alone or in pairs. Whether we stand close to each other or even hold hands. We shape public space by how we present ourselves. Just like the people around us. Public space is our stage.*

*People smile at us. Sometimes I hear their comments when they read the sticker on our backs. Unfortunately too quietly to understand what they are saying.*

*I wonder if I can feel you through our hand connection. Feel how you are right now. Where you are right now.*

*We meet a group of kindergartners. They are also walking hand in hand in rows of two.*

*Suddenly I feel childlike with you. Holding on to you. To be held. Not to get lost.*

*Hand in hand, we take up more space on the sidewalk. But sometimes the sidewalks are so narrow that we can't even walk side by side. Is this intentional? Should we only walk alone on the sidewalk? Or are they so narrow that there is room for cars?*

*You stumble. I catch you. We're hand in hand. You can't really fall, our hand connection automatically stops you from falling. It's a real connection. But it also makes me feel mentally stronger out here in public. I am no longer alone. There are two of us.*

*A couple holding hands passed us. They swing their arms, hand in hand. Is this love? Or just an image of it? What images do we evoke in passersby?*

*My dimensions have changed. Hand in hand with you, I have become wider and navigate the space differently. Together we are less agile and flexible.*

*We approach a construction site, slow down, see if we can pass with our full width. You let me go first. I look around for you. Are you going to make it? I feel partly responsible for you.*

*My attention wavers between the perception of our hand contact and the outside world, which I continue to observe with curiosity. The city passes us at a leisurely pace and we pass it. My perception is sharpened. I discover new things. Plants hanging on the walls of houses, a place where new furniture is made out of old, a social restaurant. I see people interacting, hear a few scraps of words, like scenes from a movie.*

*Walking hand in hand with you feels surprisingly ordinary and familiar, even though we don't really know each other yet. Almost as if this familiarity is possible with anyone walking hand in hand. It only seems strange when I think about it.*

*As we walk, my tension eases more and more. There's nothing to do, except to help decide where to go next from time to time.*

*There's nothing to do except help decide where to go from time to time. I just have to breathe. And that happens all by itself. It's peaceful and easy to walk hand in hand. Almost like a meditation.*

*And it's a sensual way to meet and get to know each other. Even if it is just this one walk, at least we were with each other for that time. Were close to each other. That's rare. How many people have I walked with hand in hand?*

*Time has changed. I no longer know how long we've been walking. I'm surprised when the alarm clock rings and half an hour has passed.*

*We slowly let go of each other's hands. But the impression of you remains as a memory in the palm of my hand. As if it were written in my hand. All the different hands. Fragile, sturdy, delicate, warm, strong, soft, tense.*

*I think I know a little bit about who you are because I felt your hand.*