

Feminist Geographies - A counter-mapping of the city of Karachi

Introduction: The proposed project is an invitation for those who identify as women and/or queer to counter-map the city of Karachi, through exploring intimate feminist geographies. This will happen through a series of online and in person workshops, encounters with the city across spatial and temporal realities. Exploring lives in public spaces, the ways in which we relate to the city, ourselves and our communities. And translating these stories/memories/imaginings into drawings, sounds, cartographies, text that will be woven into a counter map.

These workshops are a necessary way to write in/ archive narratives of belonging, of chaos, of romance and friendships that exist outside of stories of fear and violence we are familiar with. Through creating a living archive of stories that enable belonging, familiarity, that offer new ways of sharing experiences, knowledge, trusts, romance and resistance, we will begin engaging with a collective memory too. It is also a call to loiter, to walk the city, to claim it as our own.

Workshops will involve the participants in the creation of different artistic outputs using writing, drawing exercises and discussion to think about our experiences in the city, there will also be a suggested activity after each workshop encouraging further explorations with the city, personal narratives and involve the creation of different visual or sound pieces. The locations of in person workshops will offer unique ecological, cultural, historical significance to particular themes, that allow us to expand on the ways in which we sense, navigate and imagine.

Workshop	Date	Time	Location	Facilitator(s)
Checkin/ introductions (a quick online meeting just for everyone to introduce themselves, and housekeeping)	Feb 22, 2024	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Virtual /Zoom	Maham Chiragh
1. Introduction to Mapping/Cartography as a subversive practice	Tuesday, Feb 27, 2024	7:00 PM to 8:30 PM	Virtual / Zoom	Maham Chiragh
2. Who is the city built for? Politics of access and naming	Friday, March 1, 2024	7:00 PM to 8:30 PM	Virtual / Zoom	Maham Chiragh
3. Knowing a place - First memories of the city and ancestral dreams	Wednesday, March 6	3:00 PM to 5:00 PM	In person - Iranian dhaba in Saddar	Maham Chiragh and Sadia Khatri
4. Places of Rest, Protest and Pleasure	Saturday, March 9, 2024	4:00 PM to 6:00 PM	In person - Kidney Hill Park	Sadia Khatri

5. In the Body - Internal Landscapes, borders and wounds	Tuesday, March 12, 2024	3:00 PM to 5:00 PM	In person - Clifton Urban Forest	Maham Chiragh
6. Land as Teacher*	Saturday, March 16, 2024	7:00 AM to 5:00 PM	In person - Kirthar National Park	Shahana Rajani and Hafeez Baloch
7. Spiritual Routes and Sacred Places	Tuesday, March 19, 2024	3:00 PM to 5:00	Virtual/ Zoom	Sadia Khatri and Maham Chiragh

General Workshop details:

- Duration: 90- 120 minutes
- Maximum number of participants: 10
- Eligibility requirements for participants Age 21 years, from various artistic, research and socially engaged disciplines, thinking about the city, public space within their personal and professional explorations.

Methodologies: Each Workshop will involve 2-4 activities utilizing listening, text or drawing based exercises that explore the theme and create maps that take on different forms. These activities will allow an oscillation between exploring their relationship with the city from the present moment/memories, and speculation/ imagination/dreaming. There will be discussion following the activity to allow for a deeper engagement, and collective reflection, sometimes a collective mapping activity. Post each workshop there will be a suggested activity that participants can do on their own (based on an encounter with the city and provided prompt). Moving through the city, walking, travelling, meditating, interacting with space in physical locations, will also be woven in to various activities.

List of workshop materials: Journals/sketchbooks, Readings, virtual handouts / soft copies of the workshop plan, reference materials devised for the workshop including images, sounds and maps), art materials for mapping thoughts and observations / f&B on actuals

WORKSHOP 1: Introduction to Mapping, Cartography as a subversive practice

Workshop Detail:

Date: Tuesday, 26 Feb 2024

Location: Virtually via zoom / google meet and jam board

Topic: Introduction to Mapping/Cartography as a subversive practice

Duration: 90 mins with 2 breaks for 5 mins

Workshop brief: Introduction to mapping, cartography as a subversive practice to begin the conversation around our relationships to the city (this would be a space to share images of indigenous maps, mapping in relation to walking (becoming lines), asking questions of our cities and answering them with a map, mapping your own personhood, movement, its borders and landscapes).

Example activity: How does the city breathe? How do you breathe with in it? (record two separate sounds that represent each of these breaths). write a few lines about each breath. This will be recorded before the workshop, and we will listen and discuss during the session. Followed by some quick jamboard exercises.

Inspiration Materials:

- Examples of indigenous maps, mapping as relationship with a place (Shipibo Conibo, Song lines and more).
- Examples of counter mapping against colonial violence: queering the map, Afghan refugees in Saggian Pull, Cactus in Palestine, Karachi La Jammia, - tour of enforced disappearances.

Contact Information:

Maham Chiragh - mahamm93@gmail.com

Copyright/Credits:

Maham Chiragh, 2023

WORKSHOP 2: Who is the city built for? Politics of Access and Naming

Workshop Detail:

Date: Friday, 1 March 2024

Location: virtual/zoom

Topic: Who is the city built for? Politics of access and naming

Duration: 60 mins with 2 breaks for 5 mins

Workshop brief: This workshop will look at reimagining the cartography of the city by renaming routes, streets, spaces from a place of relating to them - how does naming engage with the politics of spaces and their access? Thinking through language as a tool to reclaim and relate in a city where navigation is chaotic and for women often led by fear

Example Activities:

1. Listening for an erasure in the city as it pertains to a community or history that has been silenced. If possible visit the site of this erasure, or speak to someone who has been impacted by it. What form does this erasure take? What is the language it speaks? How do you trace it? Draw a map.

Inspiration Materials:

- At a train station that Fell off the Map, Mahmoud Darwish
- Fear and the City: Negotiating everyday life as a young Baloch man in Karachi, Nida Kirmani
- Borderlands, Gloria Anzaldua, Chapter 1 and preface
- Recording of Activist Abdul Latif Dorai, on the erasure of names

Contact Information:

Maham Chiragh - mahamm93@gmail.com

Copyright/Credits:

© Maham Chiragh, 2024

WORKSHOP 3: Knowing a place - first memories of the city.

Workshop Detail:

Date: Friday, 6 March 2024

Location: In person, old Iranian cafe, Saddar

Topic: Knowing a place - first memories of the city

Duration: 120 mins with 2 breaks for 5 mins

Workshop brief: In this workshop we explore memories, acts/ways of remembering that are intrinsic to our personal and collective geographies. Thinking back to the first memory of knowing our city, and our ancestors' first memories of knowing the city. Are these memory maps guided by places, routes, sounds, dreamings? How does this knowledge/history appear in our everyday lives, and shape how we articulate and embody our relationship to the city?

Example activities:

1. Activity/exercise/writing prompt: First memory of relationship with the city - where was it, who was with you, what was the path? What place(s) does this path take you to—in the city, in your body? draw it.
2. *Mapping with our feet* - The “Sixteen Theses on Walking and Poetry” reading frames our intentions for the walk, participants walk for 30 minutes and then meet back at the cafe for a collective mapping

Inspiration Materials:

Dhaba that the workshop is held at, walking in the neighbourhood

Mátyás Dunajcsik, [Sixteen Theses on Walking and Poetry](#)

Etel Adnan, [Of Cities and Women](#) (Barcelona and Beirut?)

Contact Information:

Maham Chiragh - mahamm93@gmail.com

Copyright/Credits:

© Maham Chiragh and Sadia Khatri, 2023

WORKSHOP 4: Places of Rest, Leisure and Stillness.

Workshop Detail:

Date: Tuesday, 9 March 2024

Location: In person, Kidney Hill Park, Dhoraji

Topic: Places of Rest, Leisure and Protest

Duration: 120 mins with 2 breaks for 5 mins

Workshop brief: Exploring stillness/rest/leisure as sites of mapping liberation within our own bodies and communities. We will think about our companions in our walks/protests through the city/land. And we will talk about connection and community.... how these very actions and protests, of leisure and everyday pleasure, can possibly lead us towards deeper and more meaningful engagements with our spaces/movements.

Example Activity:

1. How do we map freedom and protest through rest? Collective discussion post activity
2. Concept of Marmara - derived from the Kanada term for 'tree' encapsulates the whispers that break new ground forming the basis for little India gatherings across Karnataka. What starts as a murmur might one day grow into a collective hubbub, challenging establishing norms and narratives. <https://vimochana.co.in/marmara-archives-2/>

Inspiration Materials:

- Women at Leisure, Sohrabi
- Why Loiter? Courting Risk
- Ali Amirali interview excerpt

Contact Information:

Maham Chiragh - mahamm93@gmail.com

Copyright/Credits:

© Sadia Khatri and Maham Chiragh, 2023

WORKSHOP 5: In the body- Thinking through internal Landscapes and sensory experiences

Workshop Detail:

Date: Friday, 12 March 2024

Location: In person, Clifton Urban Forest (seaview)

Duration: 120 minutes

Topic: In the body

Duration: 90- 120 mins with 2 breaks for 10 and 5 mins

Workshop brief: This workshop deal with seeking answers to a series of questions; we spend a lot of time thinking about what is outside of us, what about the landscapes within, how do they shift and form through our relationship with our environments (shrinking, moving, expanding often in response to social expectations rather than a movement of spirit. What maps do they contain? This workshop could be used to draw on senses (surfaces, textures, smells etc - drawing a map through a particular sense possibly).

Example activity:

1. Creating sensory/sound map through meditation and listening exercise

2. Mapping exercise, drawing the meeting of borders, a place in the city where a border crossed over you, where the peripheries of your body met the soft/hard edges of the city.
3. Collectively mapping ancestral dreams

Inspiration Materials:

- Uses of the Erotic by Audre Lorde, The Places I have taken my body, Molly McCully Brown
- [Chuckee map](#), Pathways in the world of the dead
- Walbiri ancestral maps, [place as vortex](#)
- Examples for protest transforming cities

Contact Information:

Maham Chiragh - mahamm93@gmail.com

Copyright/Credits:

© Maham Chiragh 2023

WORKSHOP 6: Kinship with Land

Workshop Detail:

Duration: 7 hours

Maximum number of participants: 12

Location: Kirthar National Park, multiple locations

Workshop Brief: This workshop takes as a starting point our profound alienation and disconnection from the animate landscapes and sacred ecologies we inhabit. We will begin by exploring how the histories of Karachi's development and expansion are predicated on the destruction of natural ecologies and dispossession of indigenous communities and settlements. We will sit with the last survey map of Karachi (2002) - to think through the normative/dominant ways of seeing/visualizing the city that continue to obscure, contain and delimit our relationship to land. While colonial and state maps try to convince us that land is a passive setting—banjar, ghairabad, ghairamehfooz—the workshop invites us to learn to listen and dwell in landscapes that are alive, aware, expressive. We trace how enclosures of land have been accompanied by enclosures of knowledge, enclosures of our sense doors and ways of knowing/relating to the multiple more-than-human sensibilities that animate the land around us. We turn to two ecological formations, the Kirthar mountains and the seasonal rivers, as orientation devices through which we can turn towards the loss of our ancestral reciprocity with land and water. While reckoning with the past and present destruction and decimation of Karachi's mountains and rivers, the workshop will focus on alternate practices of witnessing/remembering/relating through which communities are resisting the disappearing of their ecologies and homelands. These practices show us ways and paths towards practicing/expressing reciprocity, kinship, love, grief and connection with the land.

Activity/exercise/writing prompt (45 minutes):

By a water stream in Kirthar, we will do a short meditation (5mins), read excerpts from Sur Sasui together (20mins), and do a sound mapping exercise (20mins)

Readings and references:

- Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai, Excerpts from Surs Sasui Aabro, Mazuri, Desi, Kohiyari and Hussaini (English translation from Shabnam Virmani and Vipul Rikhi's / *Saw Myself: Journeys with Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai*)
- Zahra Malkani, An Ubiquitous Wetness, [Online](#)
- David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous* (Chapt 4: Animism and the Alphabet)

Copyright/Credits:

© Shahana Rajani, Hafeez Baloch and Maham Chiragh 2024

WORKSHOP 7: Spiritual routes and Sacred places

Workshop Detail:

Date: Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Location: Virtually via zoom / google meet and jam board

Duration: 90 - 120 mins with 2 breaks for 5 mins

Workshop brief: thinking about sacred routes, pathways, and maps - what makes a place/path sacred? What knowledge is made possible by the sacred? How does it restore/recover/repair us and our communities? We will trace some of our journeys with the sacred (whatever you think of that as....), whether those journeys happen to be intended or accidental. And, we will honour these journeys--and the ancestors who mapped them for us--through language, breath, and sound.

Example Activity/prompts:

1. Thinking about previous session, In what ways did you feel kinship with the land? In what ways, do you think, the land felt kinship with you/us?
2. Collectively mapping the sacred, what knowledge it offers

Inspiration Materials:

- Poems: Noon Meem Danish [Lyari](#) and Nasreen Anjum Bhatti, [Bil Aakhir](#)

Contact Information:

Maham Chiragh - mahamm93@gmail.com

Copyright/Credits:

© Sadia Khatri and Maham Chiragh 2024