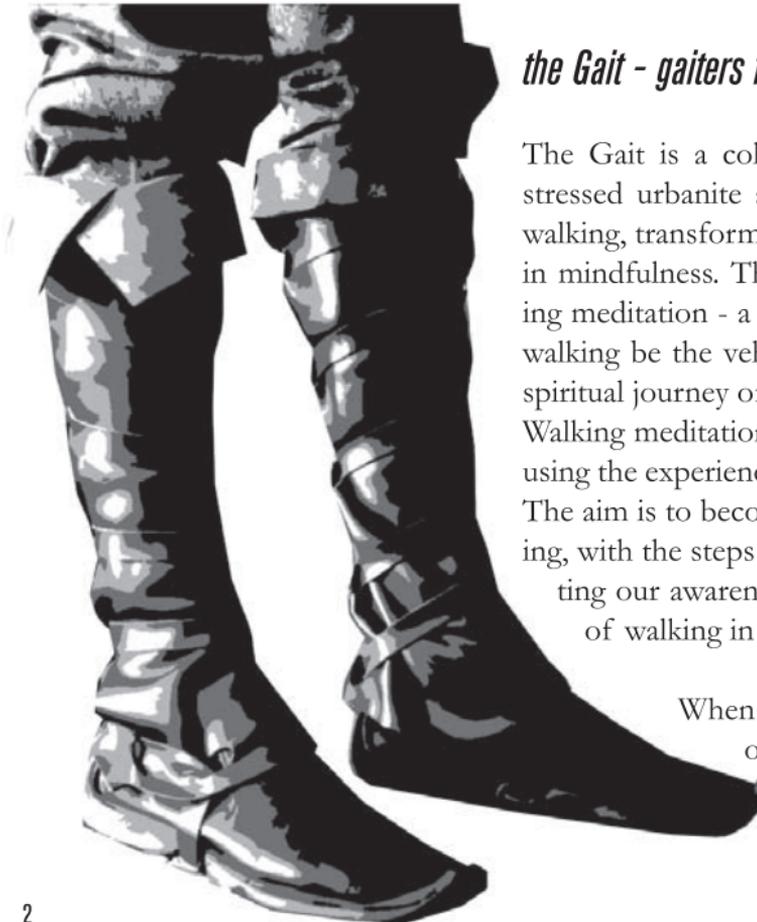


[through] ***the Gait***

GAITERS FOR THE ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT





the Gait - gaiters for the adventurous spirit.

The Gait is a collection of Gaiters, made for the stimuli stressed urbanite and fashionista. It is a tool for reflective walking, transforming the wearer to a disciple, walking a path in mindfulness. The garment is in this case a sign of walking meditation - a form of meditation in action – letting the walking be the vehicle for a transformation of the mind. A spiritual journey of embodied knowledge through the Gait. Walking meditation is a traditionally a Zen Buddhist practice using the experience of walking as focus for an inner journey. The aim is to become mindful of our experience while walking, with the steps themselves forming as a path inwards, letting our awareness deepen as we focus on the experience of walking in itself.

When walking it is generally easier to be aware of the body compared to when sitting still. With the motion we can create a deeper understanding of our coordination and double experience as subject-object of

movement. This can make walking meditation an intense experience, as we break through and punctuate the habitual pace and the everyday operation-system of our neurotic stride.

Walking meditation is using physical and mental as well as emotional experiences of walking as the basis of developing greater awareness and consists basically in paying attention to the walking process. This process might act as mirror and reflect a deeper understanding outwards to a larger practice and develop our ability to bring a wider awareness into our ordinary lives.

In our everyday walk through life there is a mental battle raging, a fight over our attention. This is seen especially from the eyes of society where we are supposed to act our role as consumers, even though we usually try to cultivate a conscious approach to these mechanisms. As our lives in this multi-medial world gets more splintered and our choice of purchase as “customers of life” gets more diverse it is hard for us to focus on one single thing, one single action, one single experience. Advertisers and lifestyle designers have imprisoned us in a

sign regime ubiquitously prompting a framed form of living (speaking, eating, living, dressing, having a body etc). They are constantly trying to capture our awareness while most of us have lost the ability to fully hold onto it.

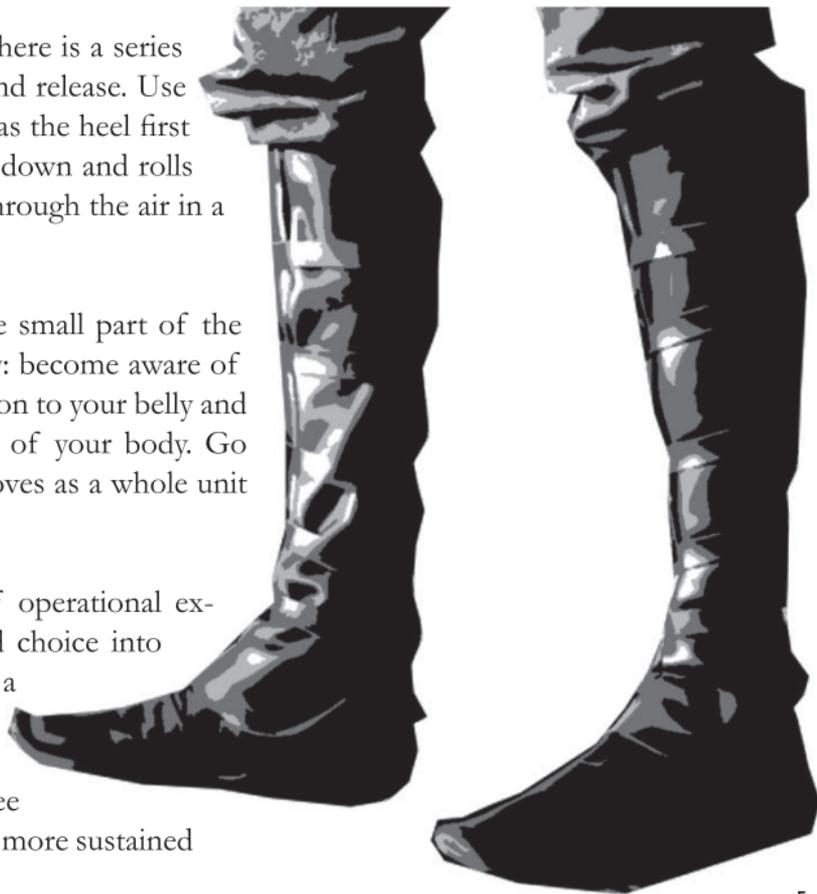
By practicing a path of walking meditation we do a mapping of our experience and in a way a “de-fragmenting” of our scattered attention, reaching deeper into the small pieces and micro-steps of our bodily activity. By realizing every step’s small interrelated actions we can get a more thorough understanding, not only of our bodily behavior but of our existence in a more general sense; socially as well as psychologically. We might experience that our choices are wider and more real than our everyday habit exposes to us. We might even feel that the future is coming closer to us. A future within the reach of one choice.

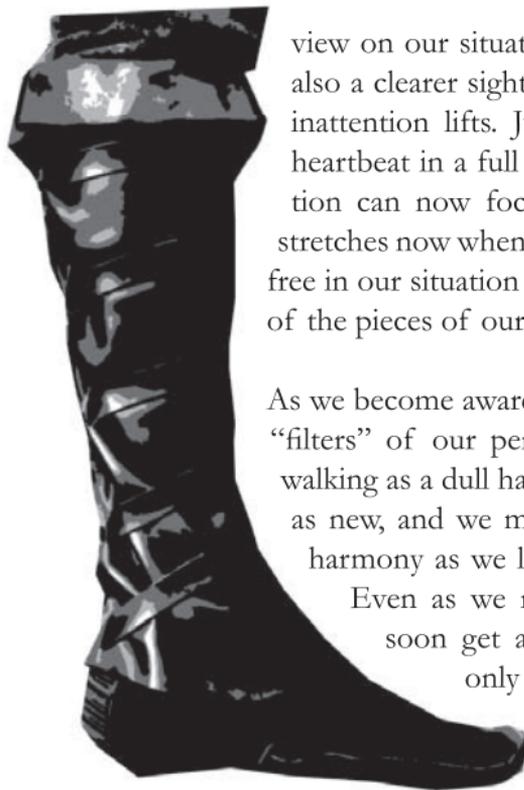
So how does this “de-fragmenting” of our life look like? It is a conscious sub-division of the experience and of the action of walking itself, feeling and analyzing every little piece of the movement. For example; as you walk try to keep atten-

tion in the soles of your feet, how there is a series of alternating patterns of contact and release. Use the whole foot as a sensitive probe, as the heel first makes contact, as your foot presses down and rolls forward, as it lifts and then travels through the air in a motion to catch the fall of the body.

The motion of the foot is only one small part of the walk so be aware of the whole body: become aware of your knees and your hips. Pay attention to your belly and notice how your belly is the center of your body. Go further into the whole body as it moves as a whole unit of experience and activity.

This is a process and a method of operational experience, breaking down action and choice into pieces, but might reveal not only a feeling of wholeness as we get experienced in our practice, but it might also reveal our position as free subjects in the world. We might get a more sustained



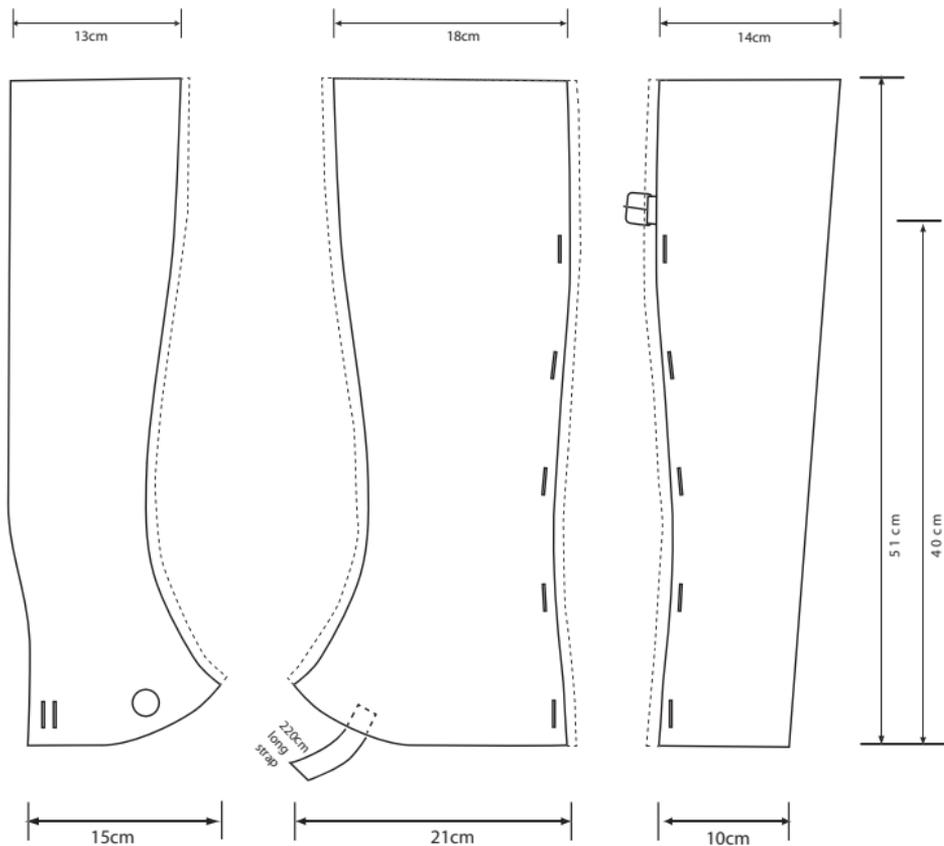


view on our situation and course in life, and also a clearer sight of our aims as the fog of inattention lifts. Just like we hear our own heartbeat in a full silence our lost concentration can now focus on where our horizon stretches now when we have situated ourselves, free in our situation through the understanding of the pieces of our smallest actions.

As we become aware and might restructure the “filters” of our perception, that before took walking as a dull habit, the old world becomes as new, and we might experience a growing harmony as we look deeper onto our lives.

Even as we re-learn to walk we might soon get a hint on how to fly. Not only in our dreams but in the full range of possibilities that opens as soon as we learn trusting our wings.

Feel free to make your own collection. This pattern might be a starting point.



the Gait is a Swedish-Norwegian collaborative design project and a part of the contribution from the Nordic Artist Center Dale to *Streif 2005*, celebrating the 100th anniversary of Norway's peaceful secession from the union with Sweden. The work consists of both the gaiters and the walk itself - a path to peace and mindfulness.



the Gait is a part of the long term *>self_passage<* project (www.selfpassage.tk).
thanks to Nordic Artist Center Dale and Dale Skofabrikk.

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