

Romantic Ribbons – routes linking romantic places

Walkshop facilitated by Andrew Stuck.
Barcelona Walk21 Wednesday 8 October, 2008

Vivacious, hopelessly romantic, attractive, stylish, independent, passionate city into walking, life, art, culture, food, romance, good times and laughter, leading to LTR seeks adventurous, intelligent, discerning, thoughtful, and interesting participants with a GSOH to explore and share romantic experiences. *Serious* or *grumpy* need not reply.

Share your worldly knowledge of love and romance to help us draw up criteria for defining a place or city as romantic. Together we will devise an index of romance that anyone can apply to any town or city, so they too can create a place that generates passion.

Objectives:

[Worthy ones]

- Determine what makes a place/city romantic
- Seek out examples of good design interventions that promote comfort, happiness and romance
- Prompt ideas and generate discussion about good design practice and quality place making
- Consider how to create walking links between romantic places
- Strengthen key generic skills including breakthrough thinking, communicating, collaboration, team building and inclusive visioning

[Vital ones]

- Fall in love
- Create life-long partnerships
- Have fun and feel good
- Elope

Process - Mix and Match

- ice breaker as part of an introductory process for participants

To get to know each other and to get you into a 'role' of 'seeking romance' we asked the group to sort themselves out by various criteria:

- month of year participant was born
- distance from home to conference
- size of feet
- 60 minute led walk with 18 participants along a route towards **Playa del Pi**, during which you were paired up to discuss with each other ideas about what are the key elements that Barcelona exhibits that make it romantic. We suggested you use your five senses to focus your minds. At various points along the route, we asked you to feed back your ideas.

Elements of romantic places identified by participants:

Sight/Visual elements

- Secret corners
- Old buildings
- Colour of the buildings in the evening light
- Balconies
- Intimate scale of the doorways and building frontages
- Fountains

Touch – participants sorted by length of arm – as a romantic you will walk within an arm's length, others might wish to keep at an arm's length!

Texture:

- Grit – but not too rough underfoot
- Different pavement tiles

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- Deciduous trees
- Variety of surfaces to reach out and touch – natural, soft, smooth
- Cleanliness in one part, dirty in another

Comfort:

- Shelter and shade

Smell - sorted by colour of jotting notepads

Likes

- Waffle – sugar
- Fresh fruits
- Coffee
- Foodshops

Dislikes

- Diesel from motor cycles
- Dog poo
- Cigarettes
- Rotting garbage sacks

With so little traffic it was possible to smell a variety of smells!

Sound – making music together

- Music (rock from stores, or live buskers)
- Rain dripping
- Absence of cars
- Church bells
- Snatches of echoing voices
- Water fountain
- Pigeons cooing
- Different languages being spoken
- Laughter

We provided novelty musical instruments and asked you to choose a partner with whom to make 'sweet music'!

Taste

- 1 American coffee
- 9 Beers
- 1 Clara – beer and lemonade mix
- 3 Chocolate Espesa
- 1 Cappuccino
- 1 Darjeeling tea

What next?:

- ranking of urban spaces and the elements that make them romantic;
- an index of romance that can be applied to other urban spaces;
- a walking and access audit;
- niche marketing opportunity for promoting better design;
- strengthened team building, ideas generation and inclusive visioning skills of participants;
- Strive to make streets, spaces and neighbourhoods more romantic
- Plan interventions in your local neighbourhood to generate passion
- Closer working across art, design, engineering, planning, tourism and transport functions

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Glossary: "Walkshop" - a mobile workshop and site visit.