

Discover Love in this City

Facilitated by Andrew Stuck, Rethinking Cities.

Scheveningen, Den Haag Walk 21 Weds 17 & Thurs 18 November 2010

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:

- first name
- distance from home to conference
- size of feet
- 75 minute led walk along a figure of eight route through residential streets of Scheveningen, the seaside suburb of Den Haag, during which you were paired up to discuss with each other ideas about what are key elements that should be designed into a place to 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.

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Elements of romantic places identified by participants:

Taste

- stolen / free food
- an orchard in the street
- coffee / tea / beer / wine – all for sale from a street vendor or corner café or *fodkold*
- culture or ethnic restaurants that offer variety

Thanks to Camilla



Sight/Visual elements

- girls on bikes
- ice skaters off balance
- sea views
- rhythmic shallow steps
- lamp posts – filigree or cast iron
- small scale – variety of coloured textures
- façade detail – notches, niches and nooks – refuge from the elements
- balconies – a variety to talk about
- circular intersections
- Christmas lights
- Pretty girls
- Benches and greenery outside houses
- Picturesque houses

Thanks to Urs & Krisztina

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Smell - sorted by colour of jotting notepads

- Roasting pork
- Oriental market
- Cigars / pipe tobacco
- Botanic gardens – closed at night that invite 'gate crashing'
- Fresh flowers
- Mojitos with mint
- Curry
- Why can't we smell the sea?
- Shitty farms
- Hay bails
- Freshly cut grass
- Cigarette smoke
- Herbal and scented flowers
- Absence of traffic fumes

Thanks to Janus



Sound – making music together

- Horses hooves
- Passing squeaky bicycles
- Clock chimes
- Birds
- Banners knocking lamp posts
- Buskers
- Sounds of silence
- Rain when you are inside
- Voices / laughter / echoes
- seagulls
- Children's laughter excitement
- Trams

Thanks to Lotte

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

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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!

- Cobble stones vs grass
- Fluffy dogs
- Live action in windows - pets
- Combination of surfaces – the soul
- plants
- *kullestever*
- Dog owners should walk barefoot!
- Hard cool surfaces
- Warm wood surfaces
- Planters with few flowers (time of year)
- Intense geometry draws one in
- Door window detail
- Façade of bricks – another warm surface
- Foot pavers on sand foundations – smaller scale than bitumen
- A scooter with rusty ironwork and smooth leather saddle
- Signposts – chrome or green painted iron

Thanks to Joanna



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 your city’s streets, spaces and neighbourhoods more romantic
- Plan interventions in your local neighbourhood to generate passion
- Closer working across design, engineering, planning, tourism and transport functions

Glossary

“ Walkshop” - a mobile workshop and site visit.