



S.O.U.P Sessions

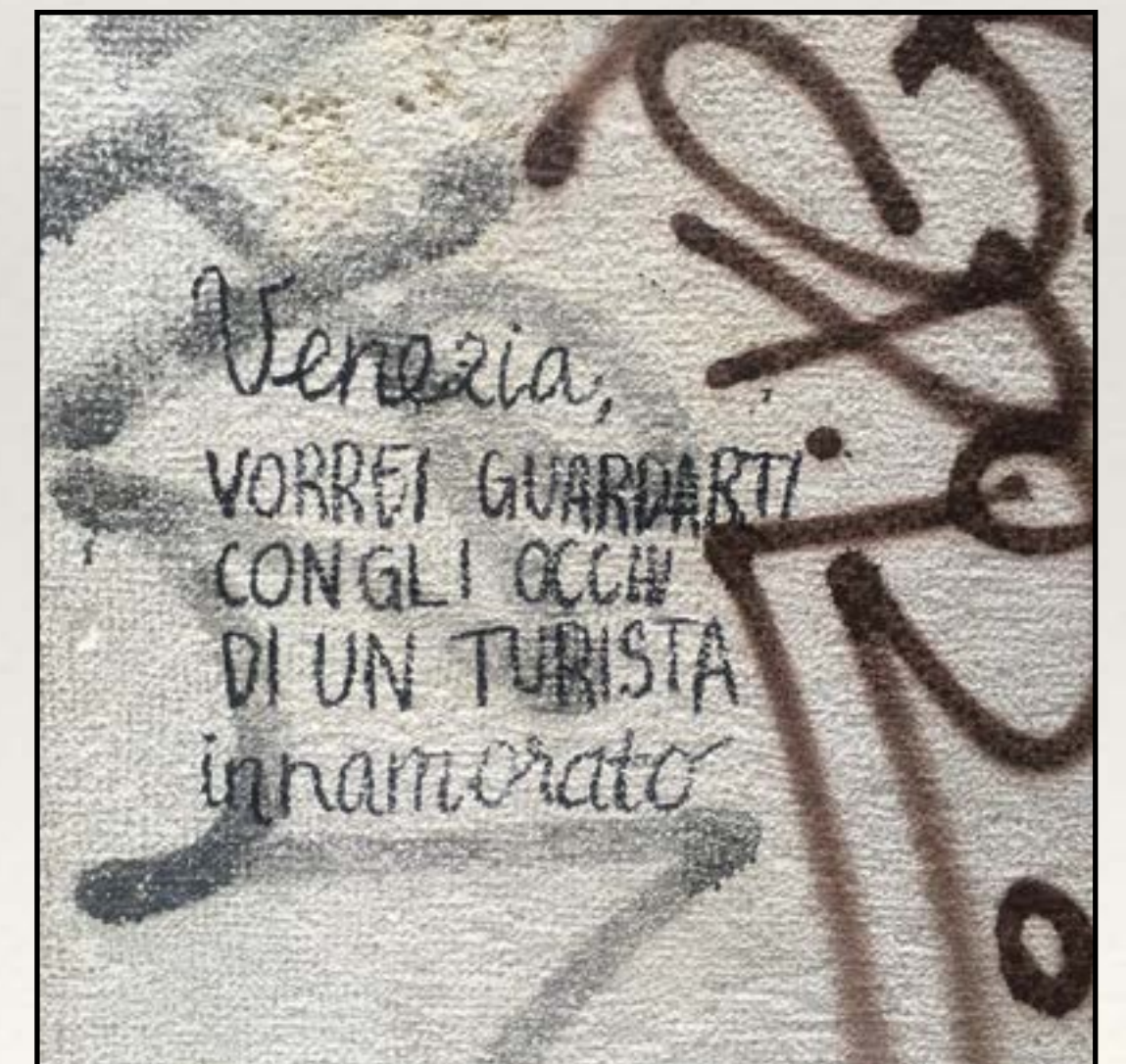
Falling in love with cities

through urban beauty

Learning from love



- ❖ Love at first sight is real
- ❖ Love is fabricated
- ❖ Love is blind

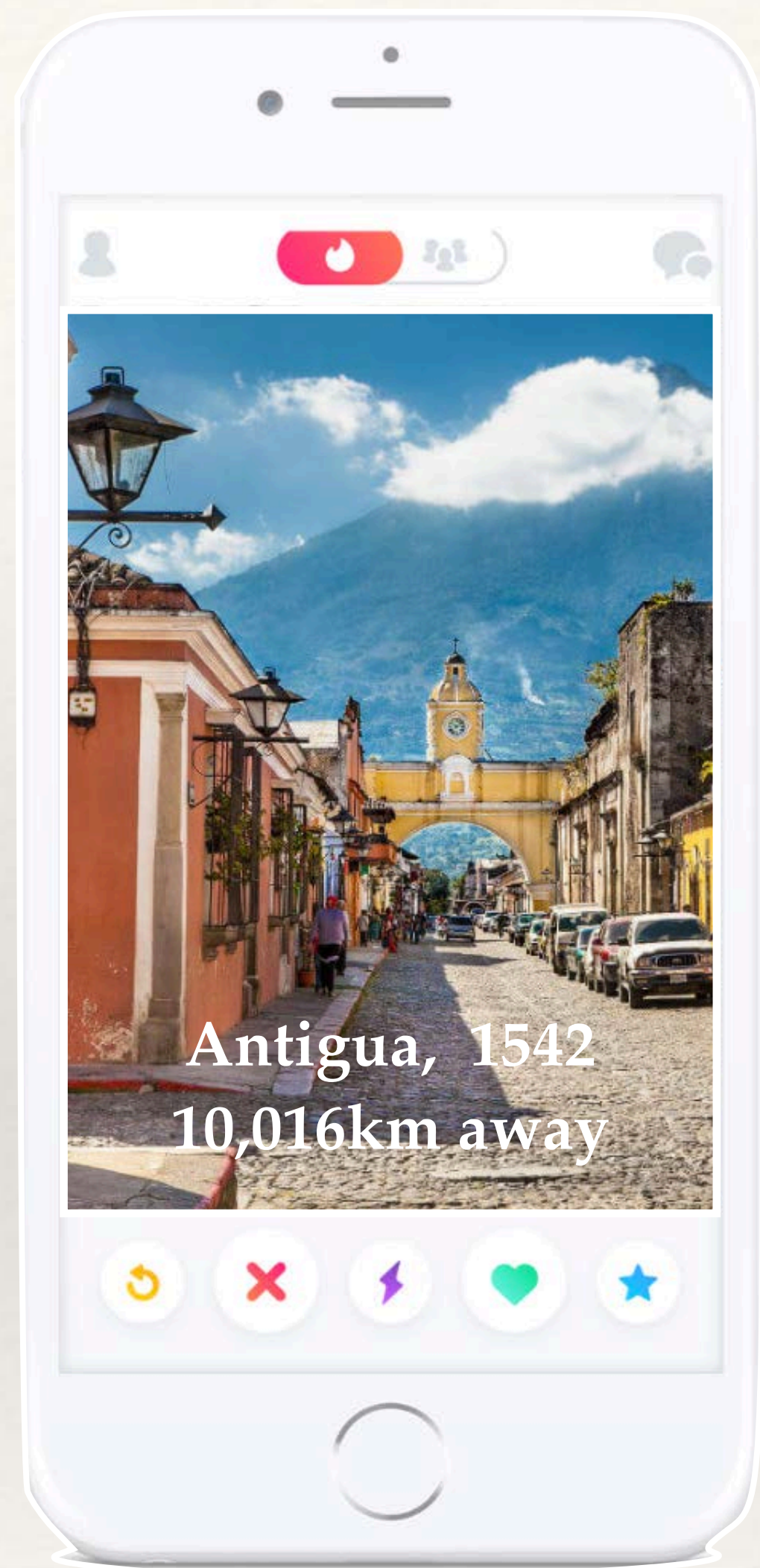


Background

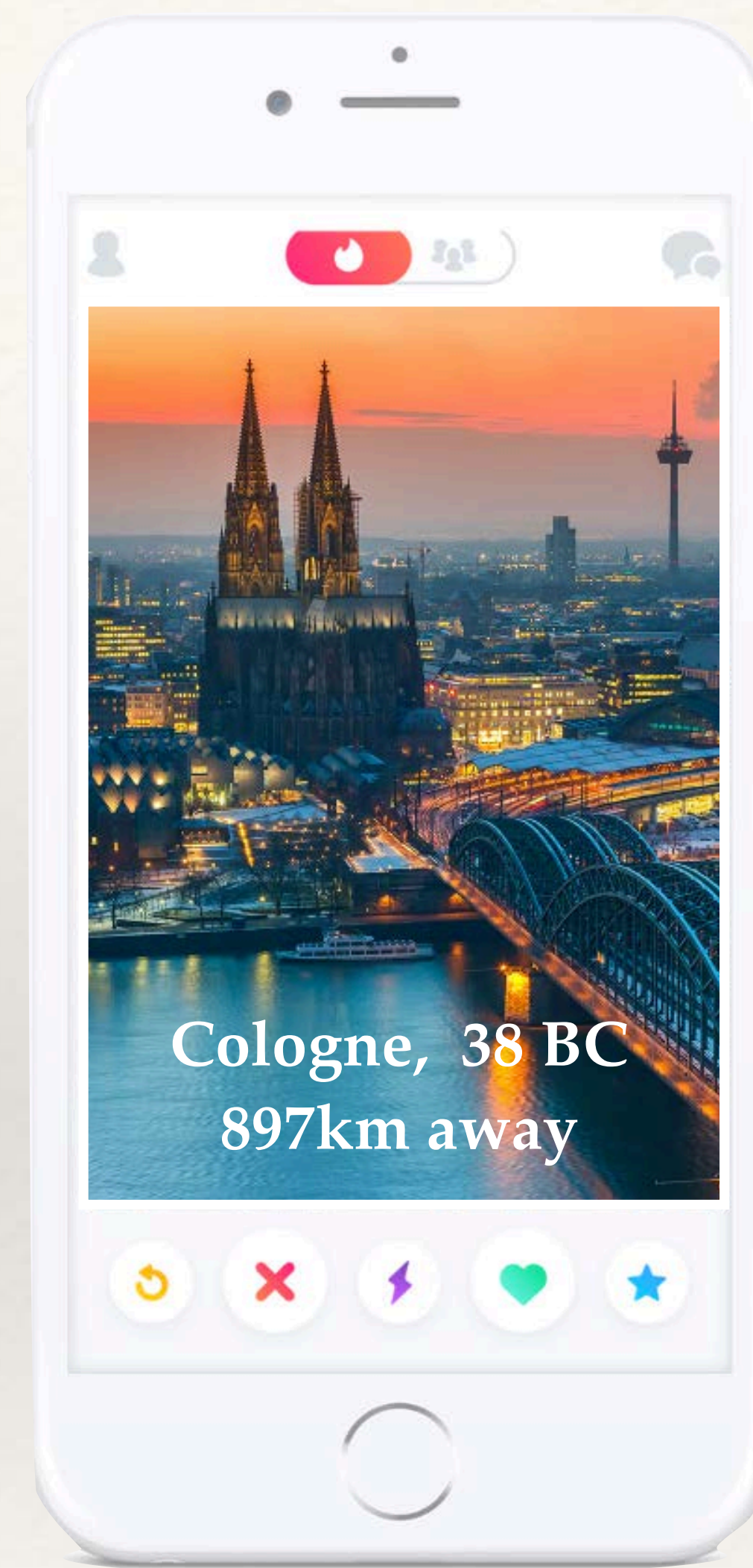


- ❖ Research traineeship with Vitra
- ❖ 15 qualitative Zoom interviews: **Urban beauty**
- ❖ Love and beauty go hand in hand
- ❖ *Today*: What makes us fall in love with cities? And what does beauty have to do with it?

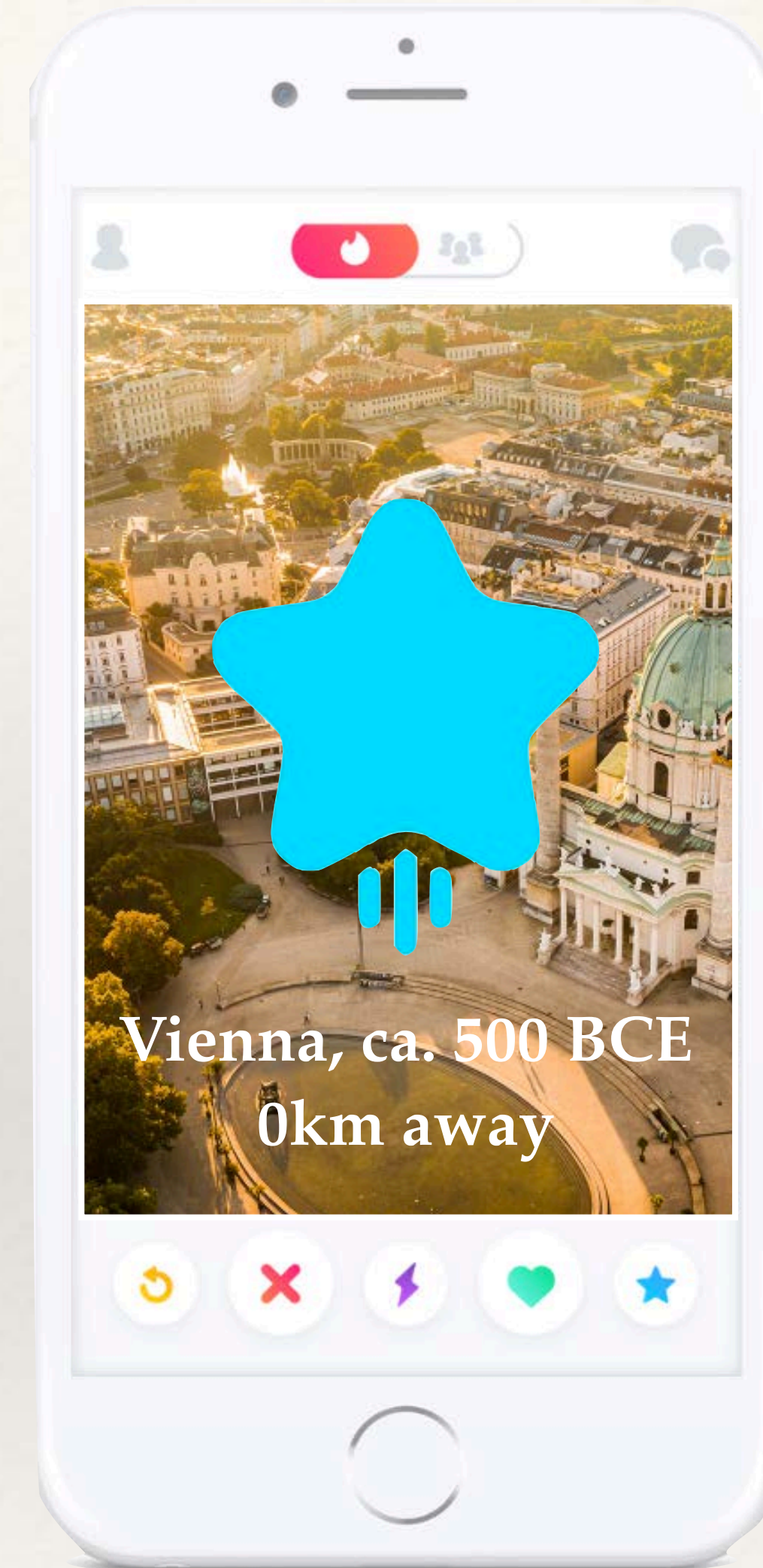
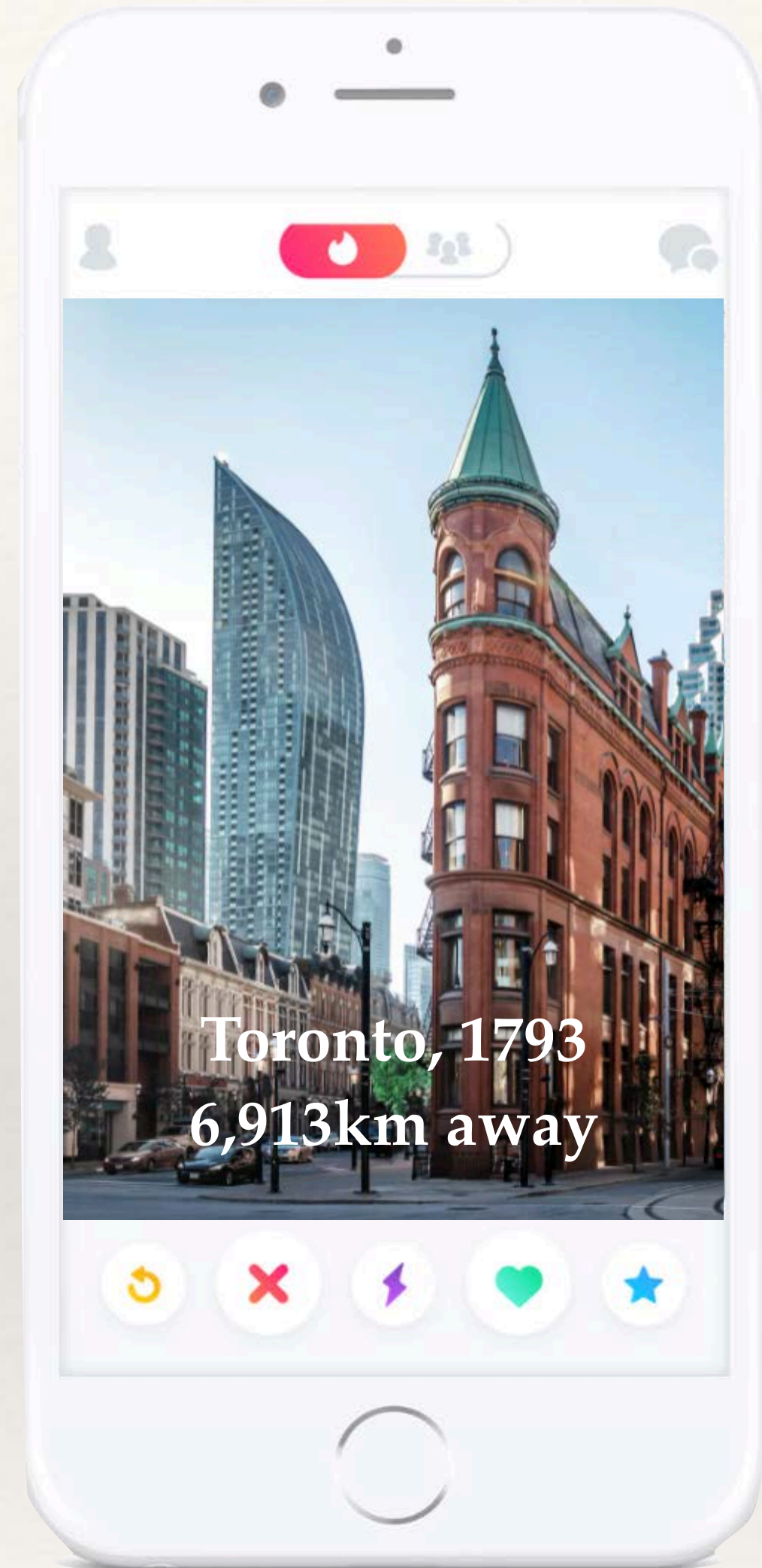
It's



a



tie!



Taste is subjective, love is elusive



- ❖ “One man’s dream house is another’s eyesore, one neighbour’s naturally beautiful prairie garden is another’s patch of weeds” — Virginia Postrel
- ❖ ‘Aesthetic universals’ (Dittmar, 2019)





Rome, Italy



Mysuru, India



Rotterdam, Netherlands

What can we agree on?

- ❖ Signs of attractiveness: clean, green, lively
- ❖ Broken windows theory (Willson & Kelling, 1982)
- ❖ Senses: “Love goes through the stomach”, ears, nose,...
- ❖ Neuroscience



- ❖ **Risk peril:** “...it elicits a dopamine rush. So a classic example would be the uneven stepping-stones through the pond in a Japanese garden, right? If you fall in, there’s not really any danger, but it’s still a little exhilarating”



- ❖ **Mystery and enticement:** “...we actually feel compelled to go see what's around that corner. That pattern can be also done with sound, right? Or bakeries are really good at that, you know, 'I smell those treats. I'm going to see what's in that window'”

Personality trumps looks – *inner beauty* counts

- ❖ Fads, fashions and trends: “What is considered total rubbish today might be considered beautiful in the future” (Alexander Rieck, architect)
- ❖ ‘Character traits’ make a city attractive and desirable
- ❖ Urban beauty *feels* sustenent, safe, vibrant, welcoming, inviting, exciting, interesting, caring, diverse, dynamic, uplifting, well-tempered, inclusive,...

Sustainable & Safe



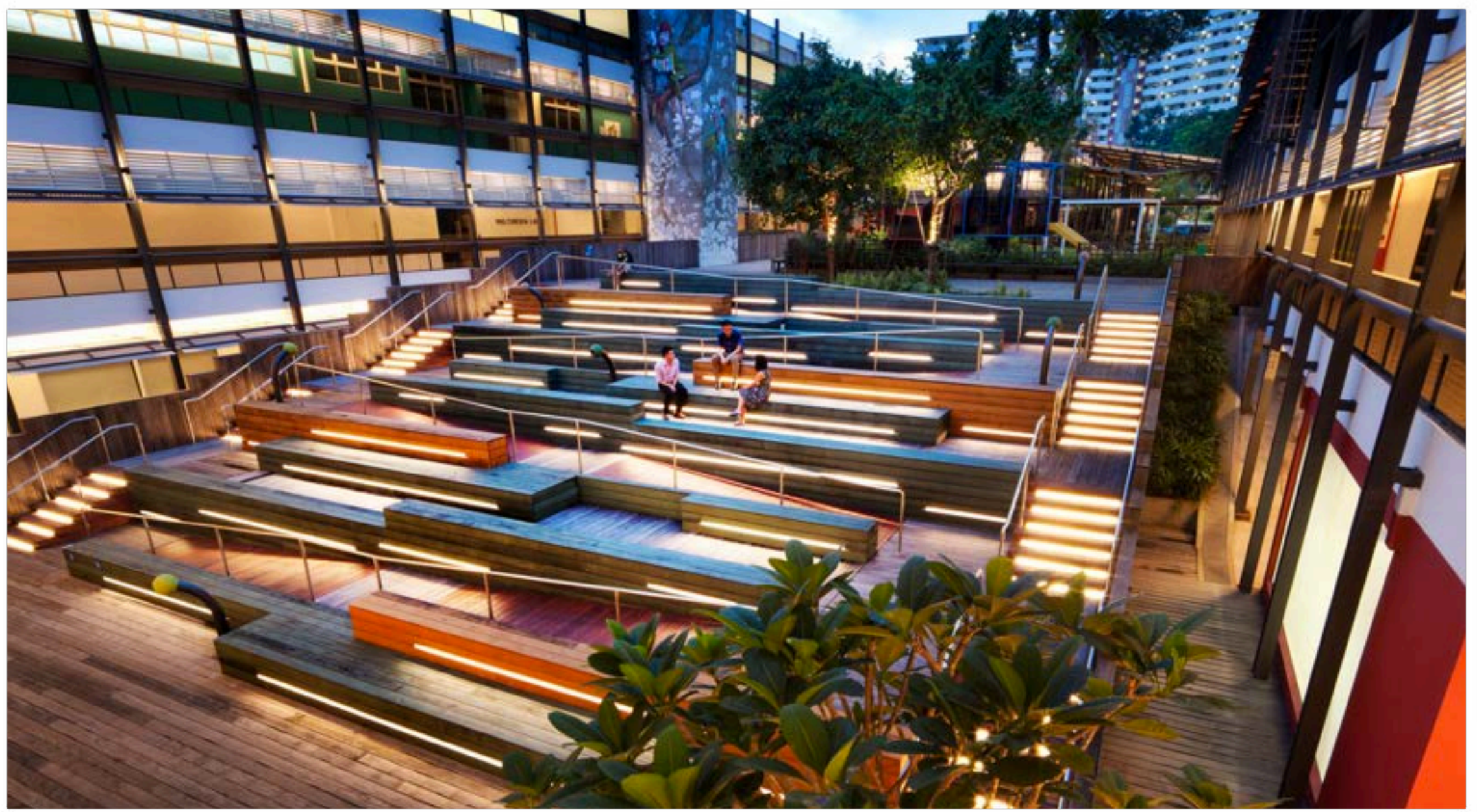
- ❖ **Public transport & pedestrian system**
“A beautiful city is where one feels safe and welcome”
(Martha Thorne, architectural academic, curator & author)
- ❖ **Inclusive, participatory spaces**
“A beautiful city works for everybody” (Lars Klatte, architect)
- ❖ **Non-anthropological outlooks**
“There are other eyes here, and not all of them are human eyes”
(Stephen Cairn, architectural academic, curator & author)



Utrecht, Netherlands

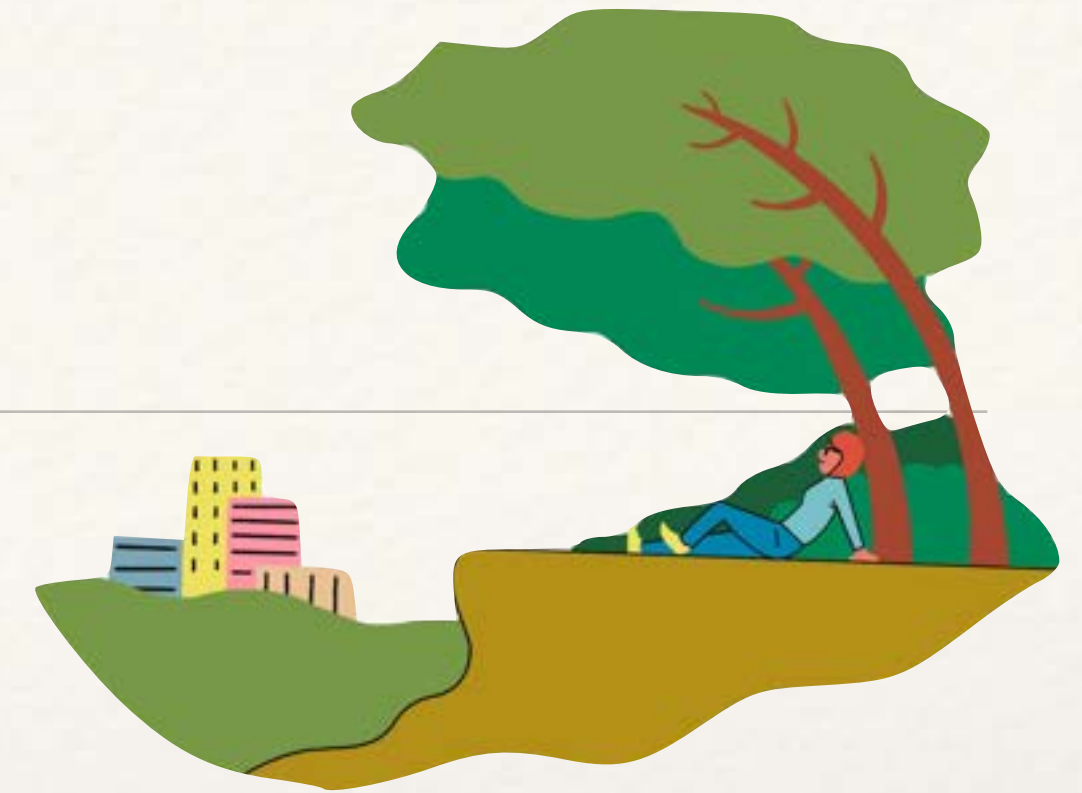


Tokyo, Japan



Singapore, WOHA Architects

Comforting & Congruent



- ❖ **Prospect & refuge**

“Niches or hidden places where you sit a bit uplifted with a very wide view”

(Julia Erdmann, architect & urban planner)

- ❖ **Compression & release**

“Creating an enchilada kind of succession can make the way from A to B beautiful”

(Dietmar Leyk, architect & urban designer)

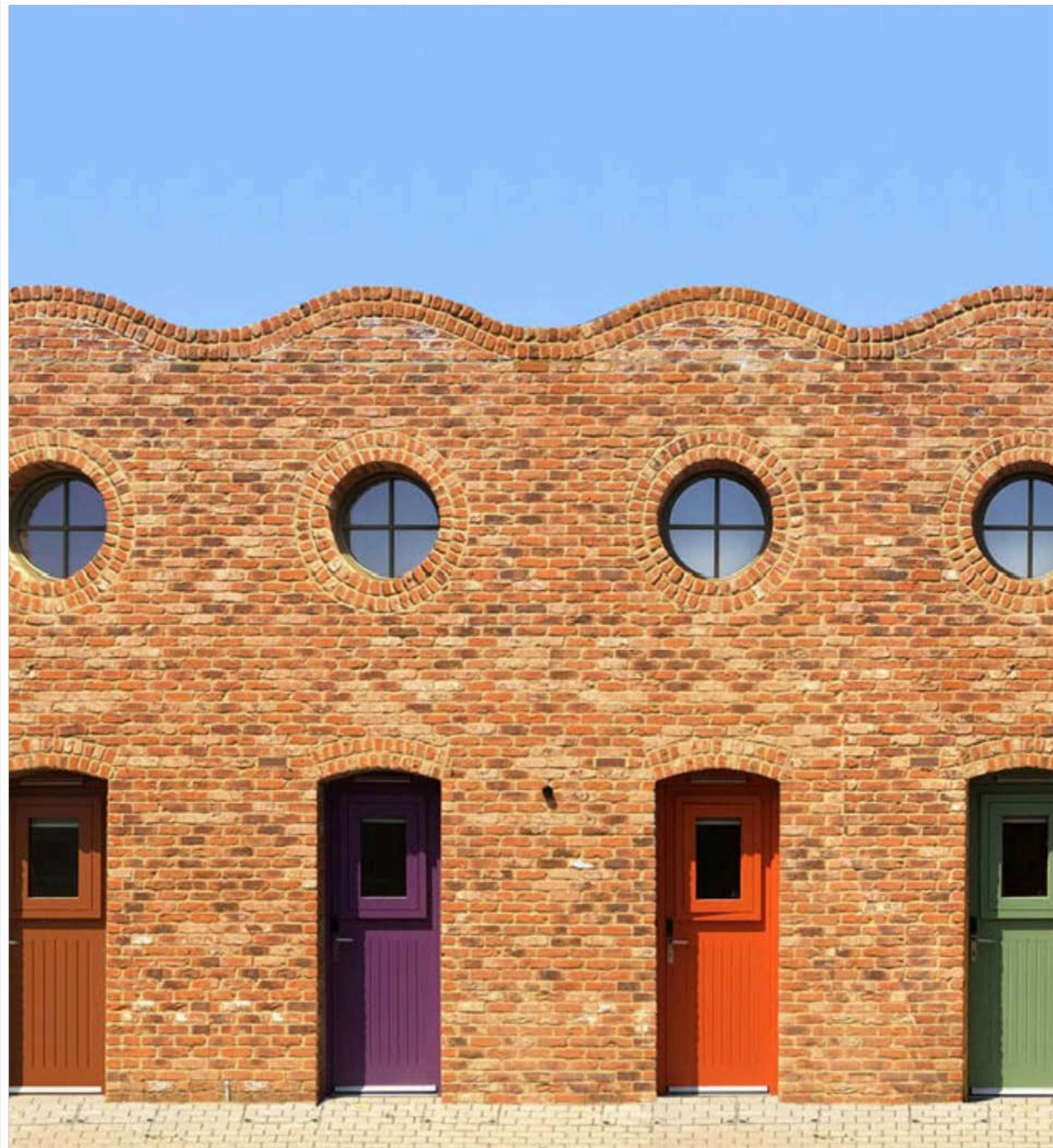
- ❖ **Ordered chaos**

“Diversity as a full complexion makes for a beautiful city”

(Ryan Mullenix, designer)



London, England, Peter Barber Architects



Stockholm, Sweden



Philadelphia, USA, ISA Architects

Accessible & Fun



- ❖ **Amenities & street life**

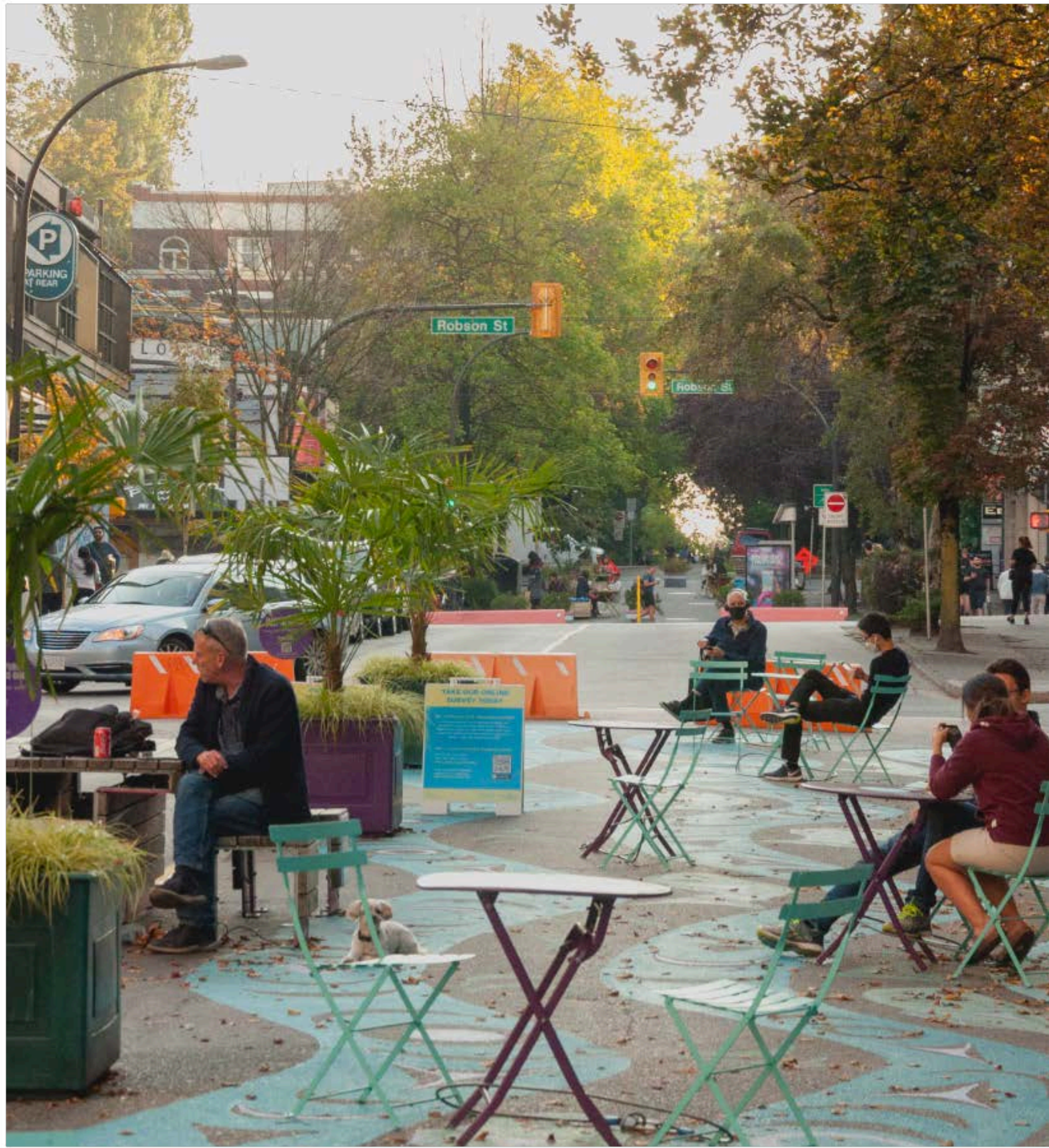
“Museums, restaurants, retail shops, playgrounds, and parks foster leisurely consumption and a resting culture” (Markus Wiedenmann, developer & investor)

- ❖ **Infrastructure & community**

“Creating healthy neighbourhoods where people can come together to discuss problems, have a barbecue, and sit on the sidewalk with a beer” (Alexander Rieck, architect)



Pop-up plazas, Vancouver, Canada



Fitted & Adaptable

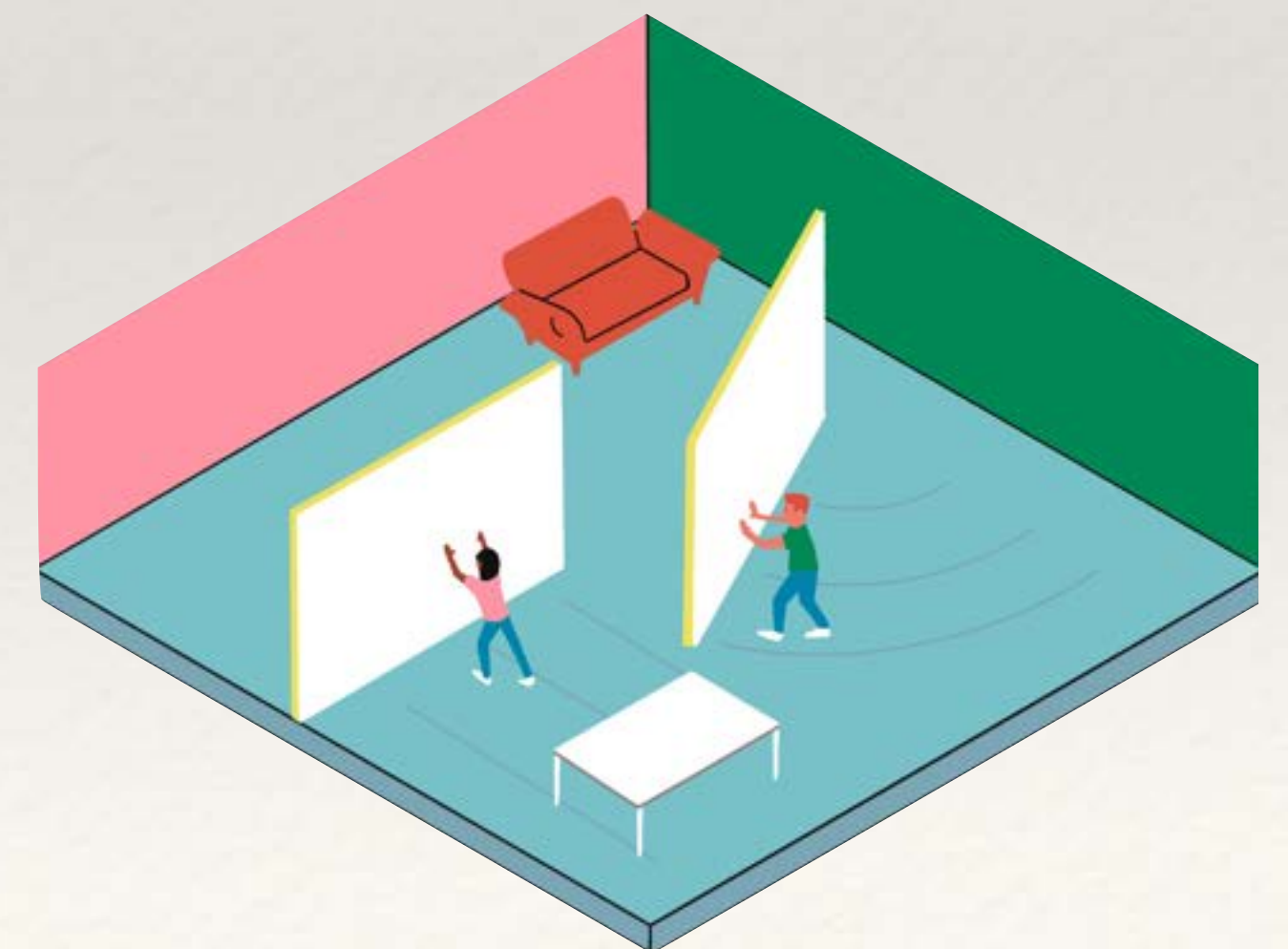


- ❖ **'Good' fit**

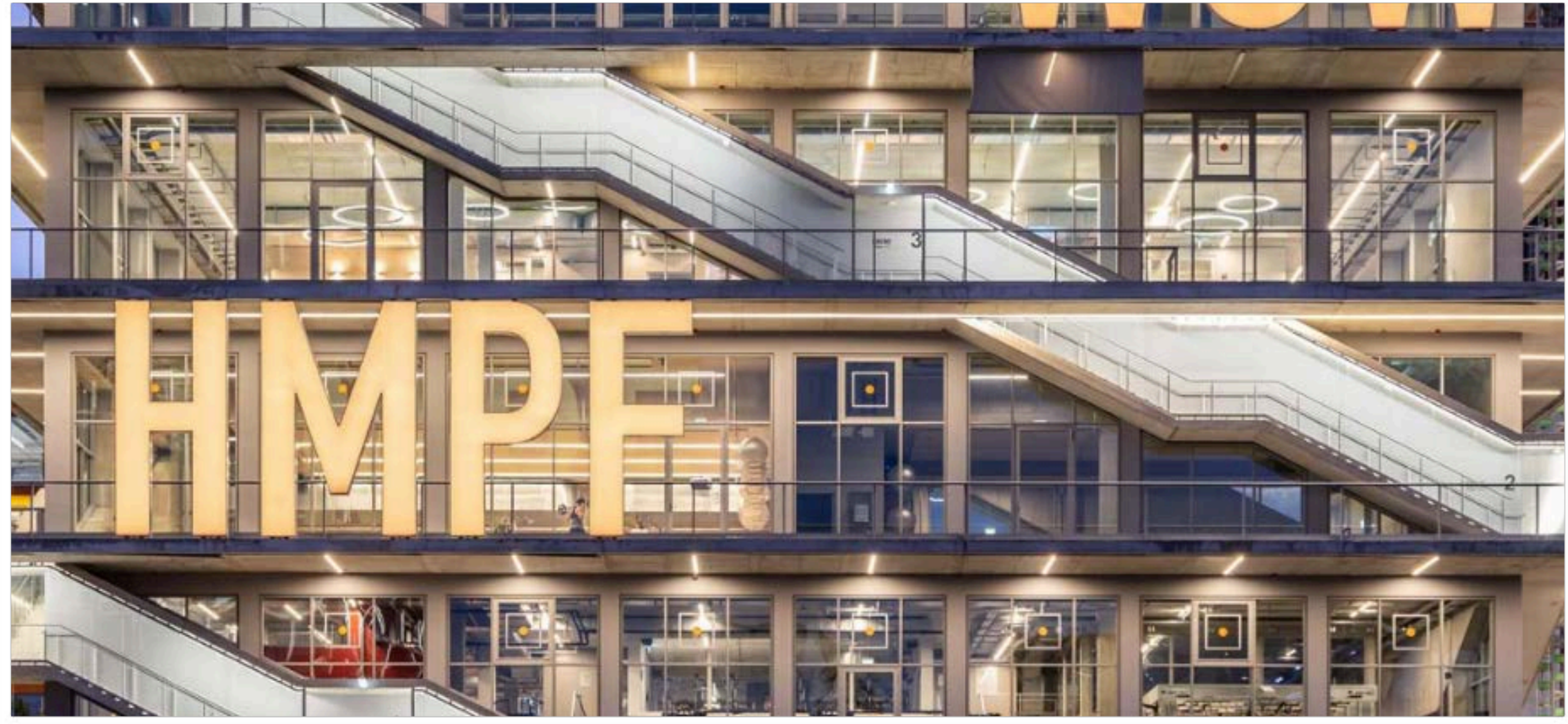
“There is no urban beauty in something random that is not coherent with the DNA of a site” (Martha Thorne, architectural academic, curator & author)

- ❖ **Flexibility**

“Beauty comes when many, many activities are possible”
(Julia Erdmann, architect & urban planner)



Werk 12, MVRDV, in Munich, Germany



Responsive & Responsible



- ❖ **Personalisation**

“Urban beauty is really in the eye of the user” (Ludwig Engel, futurologist & urbanist)

- ❖ **Commitment**

“People need to stand up for their communities and carry out civic duties like garbage collection and street sweeping” (Christos Chantzaras, architect)



Quinta Monroy by Alejandro Aravena in Iquique, Chile



Bottom line

- ❖ The importance of a spark
- ❖ Second chances in love
- ❖ The common denominator in love: Inner (urban) beauty
- ❖ The paradox of “opposites attract” (Acevedo & Aron, 2009)
- ❖ Still waters run deep



Timing is everything