

Explore Your Neighbourhood During a Jane's Walk

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Explore your neighbourhood during a Jane's Walk!

by Andreas Lindinger

Not many people in Austria know the legendary urban thinker, writer, and activist Jane Jacobs and her seminal 1961 book "The Death and Life of Great American Cities". Neither did I when I went to Vancouver for a year in April 2012 and soon heard about a Jane's Walk in my neighbourhood (<http://andreaslindinger.at/2012/05/08/janes-walk-exploring-your-urban-neighbourhood>).

„Jane's Walks are walking conversations about people and cities. Anyone can lead a walk because everyone is an expert on the places they live, work and play.“ (Jane's Walk (<http://janeswalk.org>))

Being new to Vancouver's beautiful West End, I appreciated the idea that Jane's Walks are led by locals who share their own thoughts on their neighborhood. It was a great opportunity to get to know people from my neighbourhood and to learn a lot about the West End's development, its character, and the challenges it faces.

(http://walk21vienna.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Janes-Walk-Vienna_Grinzing2-1024x575.jpg)





Grinzing „Wein in Wien“ Walk. Image: Jane's Walk Vienna



Grinzing „Wein in Wien“ Walk. Image: Jane's Walk Vienna

Two years later and back in Vienna, I brought the idea of Jane's Walk as Jane's Walk Vienna (<http://janeswalk.at/>)'s City Organizer to the Austrian capital which proved that its beautiful landscapes, diverse neighbourhoods, and rich cultural heritage provide a perfect setting for interesting walks. Four diverse walks (<http://janeswalk.org/information/walk-blog/viennas-first-janes-walks/>) through Vienna's beautiful vineyards, vibrant Brunnenmarkt market, historic Alsergrund

district, and empty WU university lot attracted almost 150 participants last year.

“No one can find what will work for our cities by looking at (...) suburban garden cities, manipulating scale models, or inventing dream cities. You’ve got to get out and walk.” (Jane Jacobs, *Downtown is for People*)

This year, Vienna joins the global Jane's Walk movement again and I expect to reach a double-digit amount of walks during the Jane's Walk weekend on 1-3 May. All walks are listed on Jane's Walk Vienna's website (<http://janeswalk.at>) where everyone can easily browse through the walks. There is no registration necessary to participate in a Jane's Walk, people simply show up at the time and location the Walk Leader chooses.

(http://walk21vienna.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Janes-Walk-Vienna_Yppenplatz-1024x575.jpg)



Yppenplatz „Der Wiener Brunnenmarkt“ Walk Image: Jane's Walk Vienna

A Jane's Walk can focus on almost any aspect of a neighbourhood and on almost any topic one can think of. Amongst others, Vienna's walks this year deal with bad architecture, photographic explorations, green spaces, and transport activism. To create a walk (<http://janeswalk.org/austria/vienna/vienna-blog/so-erstellst-du-deinen-janes-walk/>), all you need is a title, a short description, a route and a date. And, of course, as Jane Jacobs wrote in her article “Downtown is for People” (<http://fortune.com/2011/09/18/downtown-is-for-people-fortune-classic-1958/>) back in 1958, “what is needed is an observant eye, curiosity about people, and a willingness to walk.”

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.” (Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*)

By celebrating the legacy of Jane Jacobs and bringing her ideas to Austria, Jane's Walk Vienna is proud to contribute to Jane's Walk's mission (<http://janeswalk.org/information/about/janes-walk/>) “to develop urban literacy and a community-based approach to city building by encouraging citizen-led walking tours that make space for every person to observe, reflect, share, question and collectively reimagine the places in which they live, work and play”.

(http://walk21vienna.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Janes-Walk-Vienna_WU-1024x575.jpg)



WU „Rund um den WU-Leerstand“ Walk. Image: Jane's Walk Vienna

Jane's Walk will also be present as an "Jane's Walk21 (<http://walk21vienna.com/conference-program/walkshops/>)" Urban Laboratory session at Walk21 in October. I hope that Jane's Walk Global Director Denise Pinto from Toronto will join us in exploring Vienna and talking about Jane Jacobs' ideas and the development of Jane's Walk from a local initiative in Toronto in 2007 to a global movement with more than 1,000 walks in more than 100 cities each year today.

Further resources:

Visit Jane's Walk Vienna at <http://janeswalk.at> (<http://janeswalk.at>) for all walk listings and further information. Make sure to also subscribe to our Newsletter (<http://newsletter.janeswalk.at>) and to follow Jane's Walk Vienna on Facebook (<http://facebook.com/JanesWalkVienna>) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/JanesWalkVienna>).

For more information on Jane's Walk and walk listings in other cities visit the Jane's Walk Global website at <http://janeswalk.org> (<http://janeswalk.org>).

Author

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