



Diana Wesser

The Leipzig Quarter Expeditions is an intriguing walking art project, which debunks prejudices about urban neighbourhoods. We all have heard of a notorious neighbourhood in one or other city, and Leipzig's Eisenbahnstrasse had notched up infamy as "The worst street in Germany."

Diana Wesser and collaborator **Antje Rademacker**, both living in Leipzig devised a project in which residents of such neighbourhoods had a chance to tell their stories about living in these places, revealing just how different actuality is from perception. Baking and exchanging cakes are key to residents collecting and sharing stories about where they live – so entranced were some that they openly invited visitors into their homes, workplaces and lives.

The interview is recorded at the Vienna Walk 21 Conference in October 2015, at which Diana collected a Visionary Award. 21'10" 9.9MB

Notes from the podcast interview by **Andrew Stuck**: Recorded in October 2015 in the Rathaus (Town Hall), Vienna, venue for the Walk21 Conference. Published in March 2016 on <http://www.talkingwalking.net>

Diana Wesser's webpages: <http://www.dianawesser.de> (only partly in English).

Diana studied Media Art and is trained as a graphic designer. She moved from West Germany to Leipzig in 1994 when actually a lot of its citizens left the city in the other direction. Created a psycho-geographic map of Leipzig.

She set out to find out the experience of residents who live in this perceived 'notorious neighbourhood'. <http://leipziger-stadtteilexpeditionen.de> (only in German) - you can read a summary in English on the walk21 visionaries award page with an english description of the project: http://walk21vienna.com/?dg_voting_submission=leipziger-stadtteilexpeditionen. There is also a Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/Stadtteilexpeditionen>

Opened events in an empty shop. Ran a film afternoon showing documentaries about the area to the residents, collected images for a neighbourhood exhibition. Luckily residents of Leipzig are happy to engage in conversations about their city. Ran a shop in which stories from residents were exchanged for coffee and cakes.

Residents were so receptive to be engaged in such discussions, that many offered to open their homes and work places on a special day to celebrate the project. Visitors walked through the neighbourhood armed with a map with homes that would be open on that day and other places, where they could meet and talk to residents.

Diana and her colleague are currently working on two other districts, with plans to reach one or two each year. They are also curious to explore the neighbourhoods that have a posh or hip reputation.

Diana undertook over 40 recorded interviews and street music around Leipzig's Eisenbahnstrasse and created an audio walk, on an mp3 player and gigantic map that can be borrowed from residents, who take it in turns to look after it and lending it out.

Diana Wesser's recommendation for a walk is:

1. Take a walk along the Eisenbahnstrasse, with or without the Audio tour "Sehnsucht Eisenbahnstraße" (contact her via info@dianawesser.de)