

FIRENZE EXPERIENCE & IMPRESSION

SFU ITALIA DESIGN 2007 CLARISSE GATCHALIAN

Transcendent Moments

By the River

On an afternoon with nothing to think about, I decided to go biking through the streets of Florence. My intention was to explore the unusual streets and experience what it was like to be a part of the city.

I had been pedaling around for quite a while, without pausing, through what seemed like a never-ending maze of roads when suddenly I found myself about to cross Ponte Santa Trinita. The intersection was buzzing with cars and motorcycles coming from all directions while at the same time people were competing trying to cross. At this point I decided to just park my bike and walk for a while. I crossed the street towards the bridge, and upon seeing the river I felt totally separated from the things that were going on around me. It was calm amidst the chaos. I stood there for a while with Ponte Vecchio at my sight. Conveniently enough, I was at a location where I could sit down and enjoy the view. I climbed up the ledge, opened my bag, and pulled out my paper and pen. It was a picture I needed to sketch.

Minutes have passed and my pen was starting to fill the sheet with recognizable figures from the scene in front of me. During that time, people passing by started to pause beside me and look at what I was doing. Some of them even engaged in short conversations. It was then when I truly felt I was part of the city. Not only was I immersed by the surroundings, the interactions that I had with the people around me came so naturally, as if I was not a stranger at all.



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Il Giardino di Boboli

Upon entering the garden, I was awestruck by its sheer size and immediately told myself that I will definitely be spending a few good hours in there for me to be able to truly explore the space. It took two hours to be exact.

The front courtyard captured me right away. 'Encapsulating' would be the perfect word to describe it. It took me quite a while to leave the courtyard partly because I was also waiting for all the people to clear out the space so I could take my shots of the garden with the Pitti Palace in the background. Everything was in such a grand scale; it made me feel so insignificant. At this early stage, I thought that nothing could top this transcendent moment I just had. I was mistaken.

As I continued making my way up to the top the front yard was leading to, I passed by a side path with plants on both sides forming an arched pathway. It was too soon to have another moment I told myself. But, I just did. I wanted to capture it with my camera so I set it up on the ground on the edge of a step and had it on a 10 second delay. That was my second moment in under a minute.

Taking the path and moving on to the rest of my exploration, I found both some interesting and uninteresting bits of the garden. Slowly I was feeling quite tired by the amount of walking I was doing under the heat. Perhaps it was already an hour later and I felt like heading for the exit until I stumbled upon a downward path. I continued taking it until I made a right turn and there it was right before my eyes, a great view of the Duomo. I had to sit down as it was definitely worth a sketch. Finding nothing to sit on, I just made myself comfortable on the ground on a bed of pebbles. It was all worth it.



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Chiesa di San Michele a San Salvi

The unassuming church right below our apartment immediately captured my attention from the time we arrived. Since then, I have wanted to get in but time just simply did not permit me to do so. We only had nine days and we were on our way to our 7th and it was beginning to look as though it wasn't going to happen.

Finally, the next day I was able to find a good 20 minutes to spare before the church closes at 12.30 pm. I was ecstatic. I slowly stepped down into the portico, pushed the doors gently and there I was inside the church at last. It was a small church but it felt so grand with its simplicity. The wooden beams that made up the structure of the ceiling were one of the focal points along with the painted arches and rectangular apse. As I walked down the center aisle, I caught a glimpse of a small room that was tucked in the far right corner near the end of the church. Nothing could describe the moment I just had, not even the photos I took; it was definitely worth the long wait.

