



By: *Emre Alkin*

Why do people want to live in Barcelona?



I must tell you that I felt sad when our courtesy visit to Barcelona ended, due to my brother being a grandfather. My niece Alara has been living in Barcelona for 9 years. It is easy to understand why she and her husband have not given up this place.

And they are not alone; many people, regardless of which country in the world they come from, do not want to leave Barcelona. Let me illustrate this with a simple example.

A significant part of the city is adorned with the works of the famous architect Gaudí. In fact, I would say that many buildings and designs have emerged under his influence.

Those who have seen them know that these designs challenge one's imagination and change the way one looks at life, and I felt happy for humanity. However, I felt sadness for developing countries.

I felt happy because even 100 years after Gaudí's **death**, architects are still working to complete his designs. He has left behind such extraordinary projects that there are still foundations working tirelessly to complete these unusual works.

Design influenced by Gaudí

While Gaudí was alive, businessmen who wanted to bring modern designs and buildings to the city of Barcelona provided him with unlimited support. I must say that the ongoing projects, without expecting permission from the state or municipality, are a great blessing especially for students studying in Barcelona.

There are many structures built influenced by Gaudí's designs, which harbor immense details in astronomy, physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, and ultimately economics.

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If we were to list the buildings inspired by his designs, including those with roofs where people can walk: the **Guggenheim Museum** in Bilbao, the Louis Vuitton's foundation building in Paris, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles – all designed by architect Frank Gehry.

Another interesting detail is that there are works by Refik Anadol inside Gaudí's Casa Batlló. It is clear that Anadol, known for his works on digital art, has also been influenced by Gaudí, just like Gehry. No matter where we go in the world, we can find a design influenced by Gaudí. Even painters have been inspired.

The vision of the business people

What is sad is that a large portion of businessmen do not allocate resources for bold projects that challenge people's imaginations. In most countries, art and science can only be realized to the extent permitted by the vision of the business people or political allowance. The reason Barcelona is more livable compared to other cities is based on this.

Works have been made that place respect for the environment and humanity at the center, yet seem mind-bending when looked at.

For example, Gaudí determined the height of the Cathedral, La Sagrada Familia, which has been under construction for 100 years, to be 172.5 meters. The reason for this is that the altitude of the highest peak in Barcelona is 173 meters. Gaudí said, "We should not be more majestic than the creation of the Creator."

Businessmen say "make it quick and finish" because they want to see the work that will remain for future generations through their own eyes

Mostly, businessmen say "make it quick and

finish" because they want to see the work that will remain for future generations through their own eyes.

Resources are always invested in tangible things that won't incur losses. Instead of the creative effects of a piece of music or a magnificent garden on people, there is only a system built on size.

Projects that would challenge young people's imaginations are seen as dangerous. Since the essence of art is rebellion, it is considered dangerous too. Science, on the other hand, is being suffocated within dogmas.

Imagination and reality

While examining Gaudí's works, I also saw that education is on the wrong path. Gaudí said, "The technical aspect of the work done without love is insignificant."

It would be more appropriate to conduct activities that challenge young people's imagination in addition to technical skills in classes. Furthermore, designs that challenge students' imaginations need to be produced and exhibited on campus.

This should not be a job that is completed through a tender process for a library or a conference hall; rather, it should be architectural projects that involve contributions from all stakeholders of the school.



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imagination - Emre Alkin

Preferences and priorities in the interior design of classrooms should ideally be aimed at challenging young people's imaginations, from seating arrangements to furniture. Similarly, designs for social spaces should not be contracted out but must be rational designs.

If we try to bring young people's imaginations closer to reality, we will make a big mistake. Instead, we need to elevate the realities to the level of young people's imagination.

We cannot achieve this with buildings that lack spirit and an education confined to the balance sheet. Barcelona's population is about one-fifth of many major metropolises, but if I say its global impact is five times that, it wouldn't be wrong.

We must understand that free thought alone is insufficient; there needs to be a presence of individuals who will allocate resources for bold designs and take ownership of projects while creating the necessary environment to turn imagination into reality. Otherwise, we cannot escape mediocrity.