

# The Telquel Times

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## ABDUCTED BY AGENTS!

In a move that seems to parody the real estate agent's paranoia of revealing property addresses, local real estate agency UrbaneSpaces is offering a themed viewing service that has the customer blindfolded before the journey to the actual property takes place.

In line with their claims to being an estate agency specializing in unique, well-designed properties, UrbaneSpaces, through this service, urges clients to subscribe to their privileged interpretation of design vis a vis real estate. In most cases, these clients have no idea what the property looks like. "We try to work within the parameters provided by the clients given their predilections in design, budget and factors such as proximity to their workplace or schools, while including the inspired, serendipitous find", says a spokesman for the agency.

What started partly as a parody of the general paranoia in the industry of revealing property addresses to clients and other institutional players yielded unexpected side benefits.

Clients, a spokesman of the company said, are pleasantly surprised how a property located in a neighbourhood they would



**Agency blindfolds clients on the way to property viewing.**

previously have not considered could actually turn out to be the best fit for their specifications and priorities. "When they return to the neighbourhood,- blindfolds off of course, the customer is better able to evaluate the neighbourhood in a more objective manner".

Clients who subscribe to the service are often picked up from their workplace or a similarly public meeting point. Once in the car, the client puts on a blindfold that stays on throughout the journey till they reach their destination. The experience of

being blindfolded, for some, has been bewildering and confusing, especially for those subjected to a long distance journey. "The whole thing was rather bizarre-set against a soundtrack of insane French Algerian rap that the agent insisted on playing throughout the length of the ordeal". Other clients, however, though initially resistant, were lured by the illicit penumbra of the unknown, consciously relinquishing control and trusting in a privileged interpretation of the best picks on the real estate market. Referring to the whole procedure as a 'leap of faith',

Yug Drobed recalled the instant feeling of affinity that he felt towards the first property shown to him. “I came. I saw. I believed”.

In an age where the internet and reality television has democratized access to information in the real estate industry – where a foreign buyer or a relocating expatriate is able to get a brief idea on neighbourhoods, access to video tours and detailed information on residential developments through browsing the websites of different property agencies, the act of privileging an interpretation or trusting in another’s ‘eye’ or opinion has attracted a curious assortment of subscribers.

There are the ones who simply feel overwhelmed by the amount of information available on different sites. Then comes the issue of organizing the disparate information in a coherent manner and wondering if all that access to information is illusory. “Each property website is a distinctly curated experience. Whatever information is provided on each site, made accessible as a relationship building gesture, is also curated and structured to the agent’s benefit”, says an industrial player who declined to be named.

We asked UrbaneSpaces, the real estate agency behind this exercise and whose previous public engagements have

demonstrated significant influences from the avant-garde philosophical movement Situationist International on whether they have, or are planning to, entertain extreme requests from clients attracted to the potentially deviant applications of a blindfold. Their reply: “We are not here to answer cuntish questions”, before promptly hanging up.