

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A SOCIAL WORKER, AN ART STUDENT, A PRIEST, A POLICE MAN, A JUNKIE, A TEACHER AND A POLITICIAN IN ONE ROOM?



April 13, opening of De Princehof

When I came to the opening of De Princehof I met a man in the entrance hall presenting himself as a neighbor, he seemed a little confused. He told me that he received an invitation but he didn't really know what all this was about. Looking around I understood what he meant I couldn't locate the diversity of people surrounding us to any familiar occasion. The place was full of people. I had to squeeze myself into the drop-in room. There were probably 100 people; users, volunteers, homeless, art students, politicians, neighbors, and police, all crammed together in a space the size of a high school class room. The ventilation system, that was usually filled with crack smoke, seems to have difficulties with all the people demanding fresh air. In the far back, the user room was used as coffee room for this occasion. No dope but just cakes for today. One of the users who didn't notice his room was 'closed' for today tried to smoke some behind a plant. Carefully placed on the table was the piece for the opening ceremony made by Brita, it was covered with a satin cloth. A time back Brita met Andrew, one of the visitors of the Kloof. Since the year 2000 he had been working on a series of drawings called 'The Language of the Heart'. He has made about 900 drawings of dancing hearts already. His aim is to make 2000 of these drawings. According to Andrews instructions Brita had translated one of them into a real sculpture. It had to be in the style of Fernando Botero, covered with gold leaves and as voluminous as possible.

The speeches began. One by one ten



people were presenting themselves, then they were going to unveil the opening piece together. Soon the presentations shifted into a kind of countdown, the curiosity spread through the room, it was intense. It was finally time to unveil the piece. People moved like a concert crowd trying to get a glimpse of what was about to happen. Aaahh, it's a banana box! Is this the... opening piece?

A quick manoeuvre and the box was gone. A dancing heart covered in gold leaf! Lighted by the flashes of many press photographers, the heart was studied and touched passing through the hands of politicians, founders of De Regenboog, police officers and visitors..... It even moved an older woman



and an older man with a long white beard to a few tears.

It was like Andrew says: "Everything is about the Language of the Heart."

-from the interview of Andrew given by Brita, Gimme Shelter vol. 1.

Robin & Linn



From left to right: Hannah, Belliot, Daryl, Brita, and Gerda

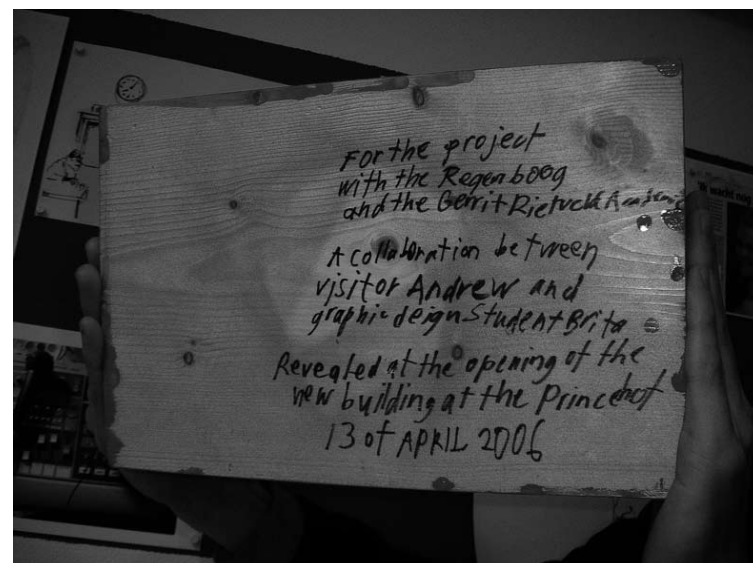
Brita struggling for a heart of gold

Language of the Heart part 2.

The gold heart sculpture for the series "The Language of the Heart" was not finished until the very moment of the opening ceremony of De Princehof. The paint wasn't even dry when it was unveiled. It was made from a drawing by visitor Andrew in De Kloof, and then cut out by a machine in 3D. The material this machine uses is foam, so the heart is soft. It needed extra coating of hard plastic not to break and I found it in a store that has all kinds of plastic material normally used for objects in the movie industry. After the plastic coating it was covered with real gold leaf and details were painted in colors after Andrews drawing. After that, the finished sculpture was carefully attached to a pedestal made of wood, put in a banana-box and brought to the opening at De Princehof. There we wanted to cover it in a white satin cloth but the slippery material made it impossible, so we made some kind of construction with the banana-box and sticks, then we put the satin cloth on top. It was offered to alderman Hannah Belliot as a symbolic gift during the opening ceremony.

Every stage in the process of making the heart needed help of another professional: Andrew who made the 2000 drawings of dancing hearts, Jacob who made the 3-D drawing that went to Christian who operated the 3D machine, then the plastic coating expert guy, then the girl in the art supplies store at Rozengracht, and Patriez who helped me put it together and fix the wooden pedestal. At the end the result was striking. It looked rather like an Easter egg of chocolate or a giant bonbon than a heart of gold. It is supposed to be placed at a shelf permanently. At this moment it is still sitting on top of the kitchen's cupboard.

Brita



We tried to track down Andrew in every shelter but unfortunately we couldn't find him. We hope he is doing well and will see the sculpture soon in the Princehof.

Squatters on the fourth floor

Ebby's big painting was hanging outside of the building. It was quite windy outside and I was a little bit afraid that the canvas was not strong enough. But everything was ok and the painting looked really funky on the facade. As if we had squatted the new building. Unfortunately I didn't see any visitors from Blaka Watra at the opening. Too bad because we made an entire wall of drawings and paintings and photos from Blaka Watra specially as an appreciation for Ebby, Herbie, Roy, Wilfred and others. We made some buttons there as well, with different Soulclub logos made by Kalle. People really liked them, we couldn't even produce them quick enough. However the most popular were the cotton bags of course. We had an extra table for them and after some hours the table was almost empty. Later on I saw several visitors from De Princehof in the vicinity, bags hanging on their neck. As some secret brotherhood.

Jaen



Gimme Shelter issue 1



Ebby's painting on the fourth floor



Ester's paper clothes



Preparing the opening of De Princehof

April 12, 2006. It's six o'clock in the evening when we arrive at the Princehof. It's one day before the opening of this newly renovated shelter and also a day before the opening of the exhibition that we, students, made together with clients of the shelters. Robin and George are working behind the glass with a brush and black paint. They are finishing their "Wall of Fame" that they were working on the entire day with visitor Martin. Walking through the hallway you can see a black silhouette portrait on every window, but everybody agrees the one of Anja Joos is the best (see page 6). Looking at the building, we can see it is almost finished. The walls are painted in bright colors and all the furniture are in place. We wonder if we brought enough works to complete the exhibition since this building is so big.

Then Ebby and Jaen enter! Big canvases and paintings get carried inside. Now we can start for real. We frame pictures and drawings and put them up in all the rooms. The Jesus posters Sirkel made with visitors in Makom we hang in the office of the priest and a calming abstract painting of Herbie is for the room of the social worker. The yellow and red makes an unusual combination with the candy pink walls. Ebby rolls out a huge canvas with beautiful wild colors, and we decide to hang it on the outside of the building. It's so big that even the third floor wasn't high enough, so we try the fourth. While Ebby and Jaen put it up, we watch them from the street outside. It looks like a rainbow on De Princehof. On the first and second floor we had large areas painted with magnetic paint. We used hundreds of little magnets to put up all the photos, drawings and portraits made by the students and visitors. While the women's night shelter opens, we are sorting out all the material, and

some woman are even making new drawings on the spot. We piled up the first edition of the newspaper as well, so everybody can take a copy the next day. The regular clothes in the clothing exchange we replaced for one day with the funky clothes that student Esther made in the woman night shelter. It's an exotic array of paper dresses and plastic skirts, hats and jewelry made of Christmas decoration. From November till February Esther visited the woman night shelter every Wednesday night to make these fashion items with the ladies of the night. The signs of the toilet, shower and needle exchange were attached to doors and walls. These were made in a workshop at Makom with Nina, Linn and Aleksandar (see page 21). Then almost done, we just have to find a spot for 'the bags'. Every student, together with a visitor, made a design for a cotton bag. We printed nearly three hundred bags at school to give away to visitors and neighbors, as self made business gifts. We decided to hang one piece of every design on the wall, 15 all together, so everyone can have a good look at them. They looked so flat and empty so we filled them up quickly with some clothes from the laundry basket. But halfway hanging the bags we realize that it's the middle of the night and we are banging our hammers on the walls. We forgot that in the middle of the Red Light district are also real neighbors. We're really sorry, neighbors! We left the building at 2.30h in the morning. The woman from the night shelter looked almost more fit and alive then we did...but our mission was completed. We're pretty proud of our Rainbow Soulclub.

Fanny