

Art and Solidarity Collective: Rainbow Soulclub

Rearrangement of Priorities #16: Blessings

2.12.2023–27.1.2024

Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS is delighted to present *Rearrangement of Priorities #16: Blessings*, an exhibition by **Art and Solidarity Collective: Rainbow Soulclub**, a collective founded by artists Saskia Janssen and George Korsmit eighteen years ago in Amsterdam.

The collective came to existence after Janssen and Korsmit visited the Blaka Watra walk-in centre from De Regenboog Groep, a non-profit organisation that helps people with issues related to poverty, addiction, homelessness, and “undocumentedness”. As artists with socially engaged practices, they were asked to organise a workshop in the shelter, and following its success, it became a weekly event, progressively leading towards the foundation of the collective.

Rainbow Soulclub is an artistic collective composed of different kinds of makers and thinkers with different kinds of backgrounds. Meeting regularly at the collective studio in the Blaka Watra centre, as well as Janssen and Korsmit’s studio, the collective is a melting pot of people that learn from one another and work together to realise artistic projects. The collective is ever-expanding and connecting people from different walks of life, with stories of adversity, overcoming, and well-being. The collective enriches their network not only with hardship in common, but also through collaborations with other forms of collectivities, like art students across the Netherlands.

The collaboration between members follows no hierarchies and is based on different scales of contribution. Members of the group help each other whenever possible, for instance by assisting someone during a court case, helping with the application for a residence permit, or finding a place to live and refurbishing it together. The collective have also contributed to projects in other countries where some of the members are native from, such as Suriname and Ghana.

This exhibition, the sixteenth *Rearrangement of Priorities* in the collective’s terms, unfolds in the three main display spaces of the gallery. In the front space, several lines of *khatas* hang gracefully from the ceiling. In Buddhist territories like Tibet and Mongolia, *Khatas* are fabric scarfs given as gifts for good wishes and respect. In the tradition of *khatas*, Rainbow Soulclub has made a series of dyed scarves with silkscreened blessings. On a communal book in the studio, members have been writing blessings in different styles and languages, and some have been selected to be imprinted onto the scarves. Evoking both a temple and laundry lines in their installation, the *khatas* form a sky of blessings in which the lightness of the fabric and the gentleness of the messages cocoon the visitor. On the floor, a series of handmade rugs display a variety of motives, patterns, and techniques, and welcome the visitors to a comfortable experience. The rugs have been made together with students from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, and they ground a feeling of rest and contemplation. Likewise, they are also activated in some of the collective’s events,

functioning as a space for conversation. Presented alongside the rugs is a sound piece on headphones by a member of the collective, Mimosa, consisting of an introduction to a spiritual education based on the Tree of Life.

In the gallery patio, Rainbow Soulclub presents a sculptural paper kite, a flyable remembrance that contains names and images of members of the collective that have passed away, both human and animal. In the backspace, archival material from the eighteen-year-long history of the collective is projected.

Art and Solidarity Collective: Rainbow Soulclub are the winners of the Amsterdamprijs voor Bewezen Kwaliteit in 2022, awarded for the merit of breaking the boundaries between the artistic and social domains. Recent presentations include *Meet the Masters | Rainbow Soulclub* at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2023), *Refuge*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2023), *31553589 Obsessie voor Nummers en Schema's*, Museum van de Geest (2022), *Rearrangement of Priorities #9 (Home)* at Rozenstraat - a rose is a rose is a rose, Amsterdam (2021), *Labyrinth*, Dutch Design Week, Klokgebouw, Eindhoven (2021), *Rearrangement of Priorities #10*, C'est pas du Luxe festival, Avignon (festival of the FEANTSA, European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless), *Rearrangement of Priorities #7*, Cargo in Context, Amsterdam (2020).