

SOCIAL LABEL NEW LABELS: >KOM

Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven 17-25 October 2015
The Social label – Socio economics Collection & Community
by Petra Janssen & Simone Kramer

Creative sheltered workshop for disabled people (Cello care) and people with mental illness (Demarrage/Reinier van Arkel) with graphic designer Edwin Vollebergh (Studio Boot)

The Social label > KOM (tableware with a story) is a collaboration between health care organisations Cello and Demarrage (Reinier van Arkel) and graphic designer Edwin Vollebergh (Studio Boot). People with a mental disability and psychological problems are working on tableware with a story. The stories of the people are visualised in 'tattoos'. By using the tattoos, the work helps break taboos.

Graphic designer, Edwin Vollebergh (Studio Boot)

These are entirely different worlds, which makes it exciting. We work with existing shapes that the organisation is already familiar with. The tableware is functionally designed with beautiful, simple and recognisable shapes. The story behind it is as follows. I have made a series of images in the form of some kind of stickers often based on tragic life stories. I have very clearly stuck to their wishes. I designed everything in one colour, blue, and kept the images reasonably universal to make sure multiple people can work with it. There are four themes: coffee, love, music and work. Coffee represents sorrow and compassion. The people in the sheltered workshops decide what a piece of tableware will look like. This brings together the bad with something beautiful. You can buy the entire set of tableware or just one plate. But when you do, you own something special.

Annet Henskens, supervisor at an institution for people with mental illness (Demarrage/Reinier van Arkel) Annet has a background in psychiatry and works intuitively. Her focus is on the person. Participating in Social label >KOM is something else for the people of her group in comparison to the people at Cello. There is a great deal of embarrassment, there are often taboos on themes that 'her people' have to deal with. It is really special that they are now participating and telling their stories. Through the images on the tableware they dare to show themselves. It makes them proud and has caused some tears of joy to flow. Annet sees Social label as a starting point to work towards a new future for people. You see that people who have experienced horrible things, suffered from psychosis or other psychological problems, often still carry the weight of their problems for a long time. How do you make a new start when your self-esteem is so low? It is about showing yourself again, just participating, and at the same time accepting one's problems. growing so much more confident."



Editor's Note:

If you would like to join the official launch of >SCHORT and >KOM this Sunday October 18 at 03.00pm in the factory of PHE? Please send an email to mail@sociallabel.nl.

Temporary location:

Factory PHE/Strijp-R. You can also register there to order items. For further information go to www.sociallabel.nl or contact us 06 126 96 417, mail@sociallabel.nl. To obtain high-res images of the Social label – Socio economics collection you can also contact.

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Textile designer Borre Akkersdijk (ByBorre) and school drop outs with workshop Citydwellers, Programm Attack on School Leavers South East Brabant

The Social label > SCHORT (apron) range represents a new step towards an important new target group: young people who, for whatever reason, drop out of school. A number of them is working on a design by Borre Akkersdijk at the Citydwellers workshop in Eindhoven: items of clothing made from used cotton tents from the sturdy De Waard-range. They are working within a professional and inspiring setting, and the educational aspects covered in the process, such as increasing their professional know-how, entrepreneurship, presentation skills, collaborating and personal development, strengthen their self-confidence.

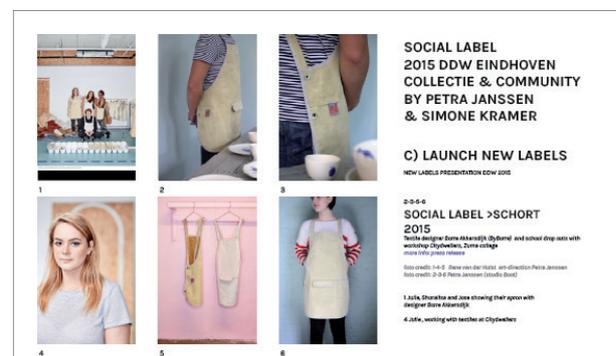
Citydwellers' Anke Blumenberg puts it this way: "The fact that they drop out of school doesn't have to mean they've made a definitive decision. These are young people who are temporarily at a loss; they're trying to find a new way forward for themselves but they don't know where to look for it." The key concept that lies at the heart of this workshop is to respond to precisely this notion. "We see ourselves as an intermediate place. We think it's good if people who have worked on a project with us want to stay, but we think it's even better if working here has given them the drive and the energy to go ahead and take the next step."

Textile designer Borre Akkersdijk is very enthusiastic as well. When talking to Social label's Petra Janssen at last year's DDW he was the one who suggested she would call him whenever she wanted to start a project based on textile. And when Social label began developing the idea to work with young people, the link with him was established overnight. In Akkersdijk's opinion,

the term 'school drop-out' has too many negative overtones: "I'd like to take a more positive view," he says. "They're young. I prefer to see their problem as a temporary thing, something they have yet to figure out, some hurdle they're struggling to take."

He too has seen how the students began to feel part of a team in which every member has his own valuable role to play. And he hopes it has made them realise that for them, too, the future has every opportunity to offer: "There's this big bubble surrounding fashion, but actually it's just a matter of taking that step and DOING it. Every designer once started out where they are now: they just sat down behind a sewing machine and simply... began."

Annie van Doremalen, the programme director for 'Aanval op schooluitval', explains how this project forms a good addition to the approach the programme takes. "Of course we talk a great deal with students who are threatening to drop out. They often tell us they really want something different, that they want to be DOING things, experiencing things, collaborating." She has seen the people working on >SCHORT flourish: "With the wonderful mentorship provided by Anke Blumenberg at Citydwellers we not only saw them have fun at their jobs, we also saw them growing so much more confident. The best thing about the project for Van Doremalen has been: "To offer them hope and a new perspective. In a completely different way and in a different environment outside of school."



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