

Capturing inspiration on canvas: The poem-painting project

By Leigh Andrews

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What better way to spend a windy evening than by viewing a highly creative 'poem painting' project? That's exactly what I did on Wednesday, 21 October at the Bright Creative Space...

With a pleasing amount of humans - and even a Scotty dog named Whisky - in attendance, Ross Chowles of The Jupiter Drawing Room Cape Town had invited guests to a special evening of mingling over wine, snacks and his 10 paintings, each inspired by a poem. Penned by Beatrice Willoughby, the poems themselves are all based on emotion and a true visual delight, carved into wood panels.



Rage

Willoughby said on the night: "I'm blown away by attendance. These poems are about my own experiences, not just words. Chowles' interpretations incorporate different media and paint techniques, too. My personal favourite was a satiny overlay that shouted redly its title of 'Rage', with a slit effect revealing a core of other bright, bold colours.

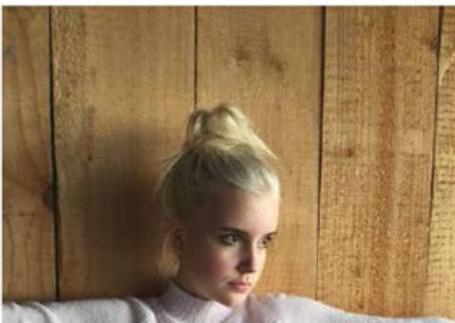
The painter - that's Chowles - explained on the night: "I met Beatrice at our sister agency and was blown away when she read out a poem. I'd been involved in another project where we gave 10 artists each a different words to paint and decided to take this further. So I contacted her about doing this project together."

It took place over the span of roughly 10 weeks, with Willoughby emailing a poem to Chowles on a Thursday morning. He would then mull over how to bring the poem to life on canvas. The interesting thing is that until the night of the big reveal, the two had not seen each other for a year and Willoughby had only seen the paintings over WhatsApp.

In another first, Chowles pointed out that most of his previous work has been realistic, so this was an interesting move in terms of painting the image that came to mind from the poem without further discussion with Willoughby. He simply painted the power of her words.



THE POET



THE PAINTER



But the night wasn't just about celebrating the artwork as Willoughby's poems were on sale too. As a result they were each

printed beautifully on wood pallets and sold for R1,500, with Chowles' artwork ranging in price from R1,800 and R3,800. I caught up with Chowles after the evening and he said that 10 of the 20 pieces had sold on the night - 6 poems and 4 paintings, which was more than he had imagined. Of the R1,500 per poem, Willoughby receives R1,000 while R250 pays for the wood and R250 goes to Bright. Of the paintings, the full amount goes towards keeping Bright going.

"It's such an awesome space but we are struggling to make a profit," explains Chowles, so every sale helps.

Luckily they also had Gumtree at hand for this. Gumtree? The online reselling platform? Yes, the one and same. It's trying to break the perception that it is just for second-hand fridges. You can buy a house on Gumtree, why not art? So anything not sold on the night will be available on Gumtree, who also paid for the temporary walls, the snacks and drinks on the night.

For more on the Bright Day Space, [visit their website](#).

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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