



A daring combination

Children's drawings brighten up a business hotel

By Esther Voet

In December the Sheraton Amsterdam Airport Hotel & Conference Center will celebrate its first birthday. And it has come up with a very special way of celebrating the occasion. This renowned business hotel will be adorned by colorful children's drawings and paintings from all over the world.

They come from Syria and Iceland, from Ghana and the Ukraine, from Japan and Lebanon: wonderful works of art made by talented children from all over the world, selected from the private collection of artist Annefje van Itterzon. They will be exhibited in the Sheraton from 4 December till 11 January, celebrating the hotel's first anniversary.

"Why children's drawings?" smiles Marc Lannoy, the friendly Belgian General Manager of the Hotel Pulitzer and the Sheraton Amsterdam Airport Hotel

complex: "Ah, we are all still young at heart, are we not? But seriously, we are only one year old, the hotel is the 'new kid on the block'." We work with a very young staff - their average age is only 24. As a 40-year-old I feel like a grandfather here. I assure you that's a new experience. In the past I was young enough to be the son of most of my staff members." He smiles again.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

"We've had more than 100.000 guests during the first year; mainly businessmen from all over the world and international



transit passengers. But if you visit us during weekends, the hotel is practically empty. The average guest stays 1.4 nights. What we need is more social communication. We need a little more life in here. Many of our guests are passengers who have missed their flight, or travelers facing long delays. Needless to say, they are not the happiest of guests, I can tell you. So we thought, let's brighten the place up with the children's spirit. Let's bring those two extremes together, let them come together under the motto: 'Around the world with Sheraton.'

Five themes form the leitmotif of the exhibition. The most important is called 'Around the world', and contains the best drawings from each country. Then there are the themes 'Japan and Peru' and 'Animals and Insects'. The glass facade round the entrance of the hotel, which faces on to one of the airport hallways, will be transformed into a Dutch wall with the themes 'Christmas' and 'Sheraton is one year old'. The works of art for these themes have been specially drawn for the occasion. In total more than a hundred drawings and paintings will be exhibited in various areas of the hotel.

BIG DIFFERENCES

"It is very interesting to see how big the differences are between drawings from, for example, Africa and Japan. The African drawings are original and expressive, while the striking thing about drawings from Japan is their precision and refinement. Such great differences at such a young age. But no, I didn't select the drawings. Annefje did that. After all, she's the expert and a businessman like me should never meddle in creative matters. That always ends in disaster."

And what about the artists themselves? Will they know that their work has been selected? "Sure. All the children will receive a photograph of their work on exhibition and a thank you note. No, they will certainly not be forgotten."

Page left: A room at the Sheraton Amsterdam Airport Hotel

Right center: Inside the Sheraton Amsterdam Airport Hotel.

Right: General Manager Marc Lannoy.

