

In darkness lies light...

Acknowledgment

It was a long journey and I didn't know what to expect, I didn't know how it would impact me, transform me...

Feeling connected to the Rabobank culture allowed me to dare to feel vulnerable in a professional environment. I felt that this common mission, to build a better world together, is an important value for Rabobank and for me. The support I've received along the way has been essential in achieving the tangible fruits we can see today.

Moreover, the collaboration with the Salvation Army and the Domkerk in Utrecht allowed me to explore and connect, to experience the true nature of human being!

After two calendar years that seemed like an eternity, I look at the person I am now, and I'm grateful to each and every one of you who surrounded me with kindness or attention, consideration or admiration, love or care, encouragement, concrete support, ... I'm grateful to the souls who have opened up to me, for their trust and connection ...

I won't make a list of the people I want to thank because I'm afraid of forgetting someone, but I hope that when you read these words, you'll recognize yourself and feel the deep gratitude I have for you!

Preface

Since 2022, Roxana Albu has shed light on the humanity of the homeless people, both through her paintings and through the people she has a connection with.

Listening to people she met on the street, seeing them, experiencing their inherent value and their struggles, allows her to capture their pure nature through painting.

This collection of paintings spotlight those who are experiencing homelessness, a testament of a precious moment together, but also of loneliness.

Roxana invites you to experience the importance of truly seeing each other, not judging, but accepting ourselves as we are...

She hopes that her work will contribute to more people opening their hearts to the person sitting right next to them.

Call to everyone

I see you...

Everything starts with seeing...

Seeing what happens around you...

Seeing the other...

Seeing who YOU are...

And what if you were to start seeing
the homeless people?

Belonging to no one and nothing, they
feel unnoticed, ignored, invisible...

Everybody deserves to be seen,
don't you think?

In this world we don't see each other.

We don't feel anymore, or not enough...

We lost the connection to our joint
human energy.

We accept that as being normal, but this
is simply not true.

Open your eyes, open your heart.

There is nothing to fear, there is nothing
to lose...

Just LOOK around you and SEE...

Oil on canvas 100 x 100 cm
21 March 2022 | Croeselaan, Utrecht



Anonymous

In a cold drizzle

Just LOOK around you and SEE...

He was sitting on a bench, in the rain,
invisible, alone in a realm of his own.

Does anyone see him?
Should I approach him, should I talk
to him?
I feel for him, broken and terrified.
I read in his eyes:
"Leave me alone, I don't need
anyone, I don't expect anything
anymore..."

I step forward, I connect...
His soul revealed itself to me...
A brief moment of divinity,
It made a difference in our lives

Dare to feel, dare to open your
heart...
Don't let yourself be put off,
Please, don't hesitate!

Oil on canvas 60 x 70 cm
14 October 2022 | Kleine-Gartman Plantsoen, Amsterdam



Roeland

After a broken night

Please, don't hesitate!

On a sunny day, a man is standing at the bottom of the escalator of the Central Station, asking people for money. He looks inviting. It is easy to connect. He talks...

His name is Roeland, it's his birthday, he slept rough, he has no money. And he continues to talk. About his day, his night, his week, his life, his homelessness, his ex-wife... A tough story, with cold nights and lonely places...

You could feel that special thrill of being seen, of being considered... It lasted just a moment, a moment he will never forget... A life in 10 minutes, shared and acknowledged...

Oil on canvas 60 x 60 cm
26 October 2022 | 1Outside Utrecht Central Station



Tomasz and Rafel

The struggle to get out/escape

Feeling seen...

Life on the street is often lonely. You are on guard,
you are on your own. Who can you trust?
Who can you not trust?

In a gloomy morning, they sit together, sharing
their friendship...
Pure loyalty and trust, a precious treasure in this
insecure, brutal world.
It is special in all circumstances, but certainly on
the street. Finding a soul...

Life remains tough, nights remain cold, but you are
not alone...
You give and receive. You share. You support.
You trust and you are trusted...
You face the struggles of a hard life together.

But then...
One wants to get out, wants to escape...
Out of addiction, away from the street.
Does the other want that as well?
Do you strive to go out together? Or does one
stay behind?

Whatever the choice is. In those difficult
circumstances, on the streets, in the cold and rain,
They know how deep connection flows and feels...
You are not alone!

Oil on canvas 60 x 70 cm
12 January 2023 | Outside, day and night



Woman with bike

Give to receive and receive to give

You are not alone!

Do you know how to recognize an
opportunity? An opportunity to give...
Give your time, give your kindness,
give your attention, give...

After a simple, bright day,
A woman with a bike asks for money,
She offers him the opportunity to give.

He is not hesitating,
A small gesture of kindness...

At first sight, nothing fundamentally
changed,
But meanwhile, love expanded and
magic happened...

You'll be amazed to feel divinity
in the moment,
Your senses sparkling, your being
awakened...

Give to receive and receive to give...

Oil on canvas 60 x 70 cm
23 November 2022 | All through the city



Wim

The road to yourself

Give to receive and receive to give...

Life is a rollercoaster, yesterday you had
everything...today you have nothing!
But you have to fight: face the world's
judgement, the cold and the despair,
The pain and the temptations...
You need to survive!

To step out of homeless life is difficult,
Many anchors keep you fixed,
Short term needs keep you from dreaming
And support often is conditional.

But some people manage to get out,
Leave the street behind, settle in a house
With neighbours and their fixed routines,
So different from those on the streets.

Some people manage to get out,
And find new meaning in their life:
Give kindness to people needing it,
Lectures, underground tour and family,
Or racing against the bus on a bike.

It's an agonizing battle that you can only
overcome if you find a way,
Look inside and realize: I have found myself...

Oil on canvas 100 x 140 cm
2 December 2022 | Domplein, Utrecht



Me, or You, ... or You (1)

We are all homeless

Have you found yourself...?

When you have everything, you think nothing
can happen!

Abundance, joy, and happiness are all yours!

But one day you feel an emptiness, deeper
and deeper, stronger...

One day you realize you are alone...

Don't be afraid to find that special place
inside yourself...

Feel more than you thought you could be,
feel hope, feel eternity...

See the beauty, even if outside it's cold
and grey...

Oil on canvas 60 x 90 cm

10 February 2023 | Croeselaan, Utrecht



Me, or You, ... or You (2)

Don't judge, it hurts

It's cold and grey...

Feeling loneliness and pain,
Hunger and deprivation,
But most of all, a homeless person feels
judgement...

There is the pressure of life,
Of work, family and society,
Of past, present and future,
But most of all, you feel judgement...

So much judgement,
Towards homeless people,
Colleagues, family, or friends...
Judgement towards yourself...

It's easy to judge... look at someone you don't
even know and think: She's smarter, he's
younger, she's dirty, he drinks, she uses drugs...
Why?
Does this make you feel better? Does it bring
light into your day, into your life?

And how does it feel to be judged?
It hurts, it rips the heart out, and it destroys
all hope...

Don't judge, it hurts.

Oil on canvas 100 x 150 cm
14 April 2023 | Best



Me, or You, ... or You (3)

Angel or Demon

Are you able to not judge?

Drugs and alcohol are very present on the street, are the fuel of homelessness. They keep you going, stop you thinking, just surviving...

Beating addiction is essential to get out. But that is very difficult: You feel the naked pain, you feel the trauma, you feel the hopelessness, the depression. Alcohol is everywhere, drugs are easy to get, from people who are often not much better off.

It is easy to look the other way when alcohol and drugs are involved. It feels right to walk-by: "It is their own choice. They did this to themselves..."

Are you up to the challenge?
"I'm beaten down, lost, but relieved! An angel saved me. I no longer feel pain and sorrow. I no longer feel fear and cold. I can feel joy and peace again..."

It's your time now: look beyond the symptoms... See the pain and the trauma... See the person, wholly, see the soul...

Don't judge... Open your heart...

Oil on canvas 60 x 120 cm
24 March 2023 | Neude, Utrecht



lonela

The spark to a flame

Open your heart...

She lost her beautiful innocence and
the sparkle in her eyes,
Trapped by her life, trapped by her
social context.

She can't dream, and if she dreams
she wonders if someone else 'sees'
her dreaming...
It's dangerous!

She accepts her fate, resigned.
She doesn't speak, she doesn't move
Tied by invisible knots
She looks down, subdued.

But when you talk to her, when you sit
next to her,
You see a spark in her eyes,
It is there, undeniably, flickering weakly,
Until it extinguishes again...

The spark to a flame,
A soul's breath...

Oil on canvas 120 x 150 cm
12 -13 May 2023 | Utrecht Central Station



Wiktor

The artist soul, Vincent!

A soul's breath...

His universe is endless, and that's how
he finds his freedom.

Being free is something no one can take
away from him, it's his reason for living.

Expressed on pieces of paper...

And he's happy!

Deep inside, he would have liked to show
his universe,

To give and receive...

Life has damaged him, but his kindness
is intact!

A world to be shared, a heart to be given...

That's Wiktor!

Deep in the woods, on his own

Happy, but alone...

Oil on canvas 100 x 140 cm

12 January 2023 | Oudegracht, Utrecht



Ciprian

Frozen mind

Alone...

Life is hard and challenging. Feeling
betrayed is losing all hope...
Kindness is no longer your priority, even if
it is your most important quality.

You need to survive, even if the price is
to betray in your turn.
But it's not what you are, it's not how
you feel...

Blocked feelings, frozen mind...
You, against the world, surviving!
Isolated, betraying yourself...

Why is the world so heartless?

Oil on canvas 100 x 100 cm
26 September 2023 | Vredenburg, Utrecht



Henriett

Black or white

Why is the world so heartless?

She lives in a world of her own,
Traumatized, mentally disturbed,
It is not easy to reach her, in her shell
But once you've done that, a beautiful light
reveals itself...

She has found a soul to care for, a bird....
She gives all her love and attention
And she receives it in return, wholly
A precious bond she hasn't often experienced!

For society, she is strange:
She is categorized, put in a box,
Hospitalized, case number 1372...
And they took away the bird...

A woman objectified...
Not seen, not considered,
Judged, used...
But we only look after the bird...

Open your heart and see her beauty inside...

Oil on canvas 180 x 120 cm
1 December 2023 | Lange Nieuwstraat, Utrecht



Eu

I am here

I opened my heart, I opened my eyes

Life is a journey, sailing through good
and bad times...

We need to experience darkness in
order to fully see the light,
The one implies the other.
It's only in tasting it all, that we feel
truly alive...

I went deep into the darkness and
suddenly saw light,
There were stars, shining in the sky...
I went to the surface, admired them,
cherished them:
Precious souls, all connected,
joint destinies...

Experiencing this fully, that is what
life is about!

Oil on canvas 100 x 120 cm
6 January 2024 | Vredenburg, Utrecht



Me, or You, or You (4)

We are all the same

Experiencing this fully, that is what life is about!

In the end, we are all the same:
Anonymous, Roeland, Thomasz and Rafel,
Wim, Ionela and Wiktor,
Ciprian, Henriett, you, me...
All connected, not alone.

Open your heart and feel the power inside,
Your unlimited potential to create a
better world...

See it, experience it...

Act...!

Oil on canvas 100 x 150 cm
27 October 2023 | Croeselaan, Utrecht



*In darkness lies **light**...*

About Roxana

Roxana Albu is a Romanian woman born near the Carpathian Mountains, in a beautiful place called Piatra-Neamț. In 2006, life brought her to France, and she finally settled in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in 2021.

Painting has always been a powerful way for her to express herself. And it was a revelation when she discovered oil painting in 2008. Since then, she has tried to explore the essence of who she is through painting. She also felt the common essence of human life and the need to experience and cherish it. In doing so, she believes we can take small steps in healing our divided world.

A treasure resides in each of us and Roxana seeks, through her projects and collaborations, to bring to light the beauty of our human nature.

For more insight into her work, visit her website:
<https://www.alburoxana.com/exhibitions>



About Rabobank

Rabobank is more than just a bank. First of all, it's a cooperative – that is what sets them apart from other banks. Cooperative banking allows them to exert a more positive influence on people, nature, and society. This is important because major challenges shape the world we live in. Challenges like climate change, nature loss, but also growing social and financial inequality. With their partners, members and other stakeholders, Rabobank wants to contribute to positive change and promotes a more sustainable, inclusive society where everyone can pursue their ambitions. They exchange insights with their stakeholders in a continuous dialogue. As a cooperative bank, they include these various perspectives in their actions and considerations to have a more sustainable, positive impact.

One of the examples for their positive influence on people, is the exhibition 'In Darkness lies Light...'; consisting of paintings by one of their very own colleagues, Roxana Albu from Romania. Since 2022, Roxana has devoted her creative work to capturing the humanity of homeless people. This collection of paintings consists of portraits of destinies who are experiencing homelessness. Each painting is a testament of a precious moment together, spent learning about individual stories, struggles, but also hopes for the future.

The exhibition will open on 21st March and will continue to be visited until 21 April 2024. Because Rabobank wants to share Roxana's beautiful paintings and the important messages behind those paintings, the exhibition is open to the public, during opening hours of the Rabobank headquarters at Croeselaan. Admission is free from charge.