

AA Bronson:

BLESSING FOR WITTE DE WITH

A secret performance in a secret place

A blessing of the program of the new Director of Witte de With, Defne Ayas.

Participants: AA Bronson and Sands Murray-Wassink

Location: In a secret place near the rose garden of the Vondelpark, Amsterdam

Duration: 22:00, Wednesday, March 14, 2012 through 00:30, Thursday, March 15, 2012

AA and Sands sit cross-legged, each facing the other, naked except for Tibetan malas: Sands' yak bone beads are in the shape of human skulls; AA's discs of human bone are embedded with turquoise, cornelian and sea shell.

Using AA's Tarot deck, AA and Sands each shuffle half the cards, and each lays out the cards shuffled by the other face down to form a circle that surrounds them and protects them. The fourteen cards remaining become the subject of the interrogation detailed below. (Note that while AA is shuffling cards, the Seven of Pentacles flips out face up: the spirits of the artisans are present.

AA invites the spirits to join them in the circle, to support their resolve, which is this: to bless the program of the new Director of Witte de With, Defne Ayas, who brings together art with the old technologies of knowledge. AA invites the spirits of departed artists: those who have died of sickness, whether HIV/AIDS or plague or other contagion; those who have been murdered; those who have drowned; those who have disappeared; those who were belittled and could not live fully as who they really were; those who were ignored; and especially those who came here from afar, whether as immigrants or as slaves; in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and their converging energy centers.

Laying out the cards on a folded length of green silk, AA discerns the following narrative:

First card: the Witte de Witt program recently has gone through an intense rethinking, a deep transformation (XII - Death)

Second card: A big project is underway, and it needs all of the Director's most 'masculine' skills to bring it to fruition, but in this she is successful (King of Wands)

Third card: Be prepared for much hard work and strife in the immediate future (VII of Wands)

Fourth card: The androgyne is about balance: male and female, intuition and pragmatism, the living and the dead. (S)he is working with the living water. In this she is successful. (XIV - Temperance)

Fifth card: At her side is he who is in suspension (AA thinks this card may represent him, as in his Hanged Man self-portrait). Change is implicit but cannot be brought about directly; it brings itself about by a deep invisible motion. (XII - The Hanged Man)

Sixth card: The obstacle is the patriarchy. It will not be easy to be a woman director of Witte de With, especially as an outsider. (IV - Emperor)

Seventh card: The female is victorious. Like Temperance, she has one foot in the water and one on the ground; she is working with the living water. Intuition and pragmatics can act in her defense. She is defended by the stars. (XVII - The Star)

After these seven cards, AA pulls the following to illuminate the rest:

Eighth card: The two of Pentacles suggests that the secret to success is balance. The money will be there to support balance.

Ninth card: crossing the previous card, the 5 of Swords warns us that a struggle will be involved. Witte de With must be prepared to do battle.

Tenth card: crossing the previous card, the King of Swords suggests that a powerful man will emerge as ally, to defend the program; or perhaps (Sands suggests) the Director will need to mobilize her masculine energies in defense of the program.

After these cards, Sands and AA each draw one card from the outer circle to the question of funding:

Eleventh card: The Ace of Pentacles suggests that the new program of Witte de With is a major financial project. Big money is needed and big money can be found.

Twelfth card: The Hermit suggests that some introspection is needed in considering the question of money. There will be much competition for limited funds. Discretion is the means. Referring back to the tenth card, AA suggests that a single source of major funding (a powerful man) will be the most successful strategy.

AA draws another card from the outer circle for his own project: "The Temptation of AA Bronson" (based on "The Temptation of St. Anthony"):

Thirteenth card: The Six of Cups suggests happy memories. Water nourishes the flowers; two children play in the garden. This is a nostalgic card. It's meaning is here unclear.

After taking photographs of the cards, AA and Sands sit and talk about the results, drinking wine (for Sands, white, for AA, red). They talk about art, the marketplace and pedagogy. They look through the book *Queer Spirits*, talking about AA's previous invocations.

They each choose and eat a candy, which Sands has brought from a Tibetan restaurant.

AA thanks the spirits for being with them, and asks that any results from this Blessing bring the greatest possible good to all

Together they say Namaste, clap hands, and break the circle.

TOTAL: 2 ½ hours