

DNA Info

Water Slide on Grand Street Brings Coney Island Fun to SoHo Gallery

By Ben Fractenberg, August 18, 2010



A giant slide, assembled by two Brooklyn artists, opened Wednesday at the Recess gallery at 41 Grand St. that visitors can ride.

Siebren Versteeg, 39, and Dave Hardy, 41, spent a week and a half building the water slide using 35 2-by-12 pieces of lumber. It runs from the back of the gallery space and out the front door.

"It's a different way to experience art," said Hardy. "It's a different set of senses." The two artists, who call their collaboration Spirit Tours, were awarded a free residency at Recess and decided to build the slide to in part provide some relief for New Yorkers. "It's Coney Island in SoHo," said Versteeg. "We got inspired by the heat wave."

Passersby can climb up about 10 feet at the far end of the gallery and shoot down the slide onto a cushioned landing on the sidewalk. To attain maximum speed, participants wear a garbage bag – provided free of charge – cinched at the waist. A hose connected to a faucet runs water down a plastic tarp to make the slide slick.

Recess provides residencies for artists that range from a month to several months. "We want to give the time, space and resources to realize projects another space wouldn't be able to host," said Maia Murphy, 24, the gallery's program manager. "Liberating" is how the artists' friend Joe Mama-Nitzberg, 45, described the experience. "I think I'm doing it one more time."

The artists said the slide will be at Recess through the first Saturday in September.