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## Hey Streethearts!

Back in June, after yet another gay bashing in Amsterdam, my girls and I got together and we worked out a plan to take back the streets – by throwing a party on the street!

The House of Hopelezz, the Gala Foundation and Church joined forces to create a brand new queer festival, StreetHeart. Instead of ‘climbing the barricades’, we decide to get onto the dance floor- the dance floor being Kerkstraat itself. I guess you could call it partying as protest. And honey it worked!

From the very beginning, the city council, police and neighbors gave us their full support. On the day, the Festival pulled a really great mix of queers sporting pink accessories as well as curious tourists, locals and even families with kids in the mix!

We really wanted to connect with our queerborhood, so we left the kinky stuff for inside Church later and made the street party all pink and fluffy. We even made our logo a poodle because I know everyone just loves a pink poodle! It is crazy to think that this is the only other public LGBTI event in Amsterdam besides

Gay Pride and King’s Day. It is probably also the first specifically gender-fluid outdoor event ever held in the city - we even painted the street pink, blue and white instead of a traditional rainbow.

We had lots of camp queens and androgynous butterflies strutting their stuff and Dynno Dada, Tish Bustillo and Anastasia Beaverhausen were crowned the inaugural StreetHearts, amidst much cheering from the crowd.

Our neighbors also got into the act with Spijker Bar holding a ‘StreetWhore Election’ and another group took advantage of the closed-off street vibe to throw a kids party.

I hope that this pink party fever grows and next year the whole of Kerkstraat will take the opportunity to be part of a new camp spectacle.

Because that's how we can keep our streets safe: by turning them into fabulous catwalks and making them our own... with the company of our like-minded neighbors.

So jot it down in your diary: the second Saturday of every September is StreetHeart Festival. Get your heels, skirts and beards ready for the next one!