

STAY WITH THE STORY

Around the turn of the millennium, Copenhagen's artists, musicians and grungy creatives were scrounging more than ever. The real estate market in the Danish capital was among the most high-priced in the world, only surpassed, in fact, by London and Tokyo. The city's creative souls were forced out of the capital's old houses that were facing renovation and a future as sought after office buildings. In a relatively small metropolis, this led to increasingly inadequate means for the many artists and musicians, who wanted to feel the pulse of the city while still having a decent amount of space.

As fate would have it, a number of old properties that were placed around the city's canals were being refurbished or left in a state of decay. They were either waiting for rebuilding permits or demolition. Among these properties was A-huset or in English: the A House. The building that contained 25.000 square meters of abandoned offices and storage space had been placed on the outskirts of Islands Brygge, an area which has since then become progressively more sought after by private homeowners. At the time, the abandoned industrial area was severely lacking in private homes and because of this pressing need for space, a group of far-sighted entrepreneurs took it upon themselves to initiate and mediate the cooperation between the owners of the A-house and a group of diverse, itinerant creatives. They were offered shelter until the A-house was to be transformed into STAY, which was to be ready for new residents in 2010.

The only thing the owners were sure of back in 2000 was that they wanted to retain the building's characteristic concrete skeleton. The rest was to be demolished over a period of time. This effectively meant open boundaries for the creatives; you didn't have to worry about the state of the wallpaper or anything else for that matter. In exchange for a modest rent, it was possible to occupy all the untamed space you could ever dream of. Consequently, the A-house became the place where you could realise your artistic visions.

From 2003 to 2006, hundreds of painters, musicians and designers moved in. The house quickly became a messy, living work of art as far-stretching, graffiti-painted corridors wended through studios, galleries, and practice spaces, which were, in turn, penetrated by voices and noise in all forms and frequencies.

Not surprisingly, the bustling A-house drew a lot of attention from virtually all of Copenhagen. In other words, a new party-and-event-central rapidly became a well-received reality. At the top of the building, was a large venue and hedonistic club where parties, shows, events and exhibitions were being held every weekend. The Danish designer Henrik Vibskov held one of his first Danish fashion shows – on the sixth floor in the building's enormous rooftop waterfront terrace. The electronic musician and DJ Anders Trentemøller played his first live gigs in the club and the artist Tal R started his notorious workshops.

STAY WE'RE NOT FINISHED

When the end of 2006 came round, it was time to move and the giant, creative collective left the raw concrete skeleton, not without melancholy, after having left their mark with tags, pieces, installations and more. A large part of the A-house residents had found new homes, some had become established artists, and a few are even currently regarded as being among the country's most significant creatives.

In many ways, the huge, free space was an important factor in emancipating and shaping the buzzing artistic curiosity, which is an intertwined feature of Copenhagen.

These events, circumstances and stories, and the remarkable experiences they've yielded, have been brought directly into the new STAY concept - from the architectural planning, to the many collaborations with local artists and creatives, who've left their mark on every apartment. The need for space has been woven into the design ethos of every floor and the possibilities for the use of this space are many: the band WhoMadeWho have recorded their third album in one of STAY's spacious loft apartments. Kasper Nørlund from the band Spleen United and the DJ Tomas Barfod have compiled the hotel's dynamic soundtrack. The Artist and chef, Bo Ramsø Lindegaard, who's also behind STAY's innovative breakfast concept, has actualised a series of attention-grabbing pop-up-restaurants in the lounge of the sixth floor. The Danish design-elite have already expressed their interest in using the rooftop terrace for the next Copenhagen Fashion Week. And that's just the beginning. In fact, when you scrutinise the apartments, it quickly becomes apparent that it never really ended. The creative past of the A-house emanates from the countless artistic decorations that were never removed from the walls and ceilings. STAY has, quite simply, chosen to let them stay.