

Heidi Trautmann

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Heidi Trautmann Column

36 - There was a dream - GoGaneshaGo has moved on - Review

5/11/2009

Saturday May 9 in Nicosia North: A beautiful young summer morning. The old city of Nicosia was full of people, young Turkish workmen on the look-out for their countrymen, and set as contrast, herds of blond foreign tourists on the look-out for the middle ages. The place in front of the Lokmaci crossing was still deserted, Rose Marie Gnausch, the initiator and her friends sat to relax in a nearby coffeeshop after having laid out traces of elephants in the middle of the street – towards the checkpoint - rows of children's paintings with their ideas of peace loving elephants, paintings from local school children but also from other countries, Rose Marie had collected over the many months she had spent on this project. Children living in the neighbourhood came to see what was happening. One British citizen Steve Bosworth, came to bring his elephant contribution, a very inspiring or let's say enlightening sort of elephant, 1 m high, made of wire with little bulbs blinking when connected, which he did at one of the close-by restaurants. And there was blue-haired Ayhatun Ateşin who placed her two lovely cardboard elephants in-between the paintings to join the herd.

Then... calls from a drum, slow, the call from an African drum, dark. A group of five drummers – the DrumInspire Band - clad in white with soft face painting, with their eyes closed. Boum, boum, boum, then the beat got faster and the bodies moved, and their hands danced. Children sat with big eyes and half open mouths and their little hands got a life of their own. The message was in the air. People came from all sides with a question in their face: What is it? They lined up on one side of the laid out paintings, waiting for the things to come, perhaps a session where they could get some free presents? Shop owners came to join the viewers. Finally the beat slowed down again: The official opening of the Elephant GoGaneshaGo event could not have been better announced, a really great performance. Mrs Ute Woermann-Stylianou from the Goethe-Zentrum, Rose Marie Gnausch, the initiator, Celal Cin, the deputy mayor of Lefkosa, Dr. Gottfried Zeitz, the German Ambassador, welcomed the crowd – among which I recognized a handful of artists, a group of children who eyed them with big eyes – and under the beat of the drums 35 balloons were distributed to the eager hands of people who wanted to send good wishes to heaven. The balloons, Ute Woermann had explained, would represent the 35 years of separation. And they flew high. How many have understood the purpose of this weekend? Yes, some said, it is Europe Day....what a coincidence...

We joined the drummers who led the way with their beat...towards the checkpoint; the officers of the immigration were polite and smiled, we had our stamps and walked over to the other side where the more beautiful collection of elephants greeted us. Really well prepared, there was a stand with a microphone and the words of welcome by all the officials who had spoken on the north side, were well understood. The Mayor of Nicosia Mrs Eleni Mavrou said her words of welcome followed by some words of her colleague from the North, and again here 35 more balloons were released. A close-by shop owner took the opportunity to display - outside his antiquity shop - a big collection of elephants. During the opening speeches he went over with one golden elephant to make it a present to the mayor of his part of the city. At the end of the welcoming ceremony two contributions by two poets were read, one of which I will repeat at the end, simply for the fact, that only this text was available. The drummers did their best to incite some inspiration in the crowd while the exhibits were viewed. Extraordinary art work in many cases from artists in Austria, Luxembourg and New Zealand, most of it we had already seen in the January exhibition (see also my review in Art News). A very touching scene was, when one



drummer positioned herself at the end of the row of exhibits, and facing the checkpoint, gave a series of beats which was immediately answered by a drummer who stood at the other end in the North.

A welcoming cocktail the Goethe-Zentrum had organized was soon sought out while the drumming continued to send messages to attract peace-seekers. Many passers-by were annoyed that their free passage was blocked.

On Sunday evening Rose Marie Gnausch will pack up these many hundred elephants, invented by artists and children who had put all their heart into this project, and take them to the next country with a divided city, to Jerusalem. May our heartfelt wishes be with her.

Letter to an Elephant by Neşe Yaşın

Dear Pretty Elephant,

Do you remember me? Some years ago you had taken me on a ride in Zimbabwe. Perhaps you do not remember. Who knows how many more persons you had carried around on the same day. You seem to know our species quite well but you are the only elephant I have been close to. The reason I am writing to you now is because I saw you in my dream last night. In my dream you had been swimming from Africa to Cyprus and had landed on the island at the place where our goddess Aphrodite was born. I was waiting for you there and we had a warm embrace. Then I got on top of you and we started heading for the Green Line dividing Cyprus. While we were walking, you with your enormous body, the people along the road were staring at us. Suddenly you were transformed into a walking map of Cyprus. Your trunk had become the Karpasian Peninsula. On your enormous body mountains and fields appeared. Then I heard you howling in pain and I discovered that half of your body was covered with barbed wire and you were bleeding. I was struck with horror and called to the passers-by to help remove the barbed wire. You were finally free and your wounds were dressed. We continued walking, followed by thousands of beautiful people and we reached the Lokmaci checkpoint. When the policemen noticed us, immediately they got into alarm position. The danger sirens started and all the armies of Cyprus with thousands of soldiers faced us. They were shouting: "It's banned. Elephants cannot cross our border. They started surrounding us waving countless flags. They pointed their guns at us. You know, what happened then dear pretty elephant?

You developed wings and started to fly. You were transformed into a cloud and thus you crossed the border. Other clouds joined you and you started to release rain over all the island.

I suddenly woke up at this point of my dream and a thought passed through my mind: During this spring while we meant hearing all the flowers whispering to us "What a beautiful world, it was actually your peaceful voice we were hearing.

Who knows when I will come to see you again, but I will be waiting for you to appear in another dream of mine, my dear Pretty One.

Opening speech by Mrs Ute Woermann-Stylianou on behalf of the Goethe-Zentrum. I found her words so right, that I want to include it here. Thank you for your efforts. Heidi

Excellency,
Mr. Mayor,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the German Cultural Centre, Goethe-Zentrum Nicosia, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all.

We celebrate Europe Day with our Street Exhibition 'GOGANESHAGO –Elephants for Peace'.

The world is a wonderful place if there is Peace – but is there?

German artist and art historian Rose Marie Gnausch launched a civic art and peace movement to raise the consciousness of peace in everyone who hears it and listens to it. This art movement is addressed to artists and non-artists, to grown-ups and children. Our children need the chance worldwide to live in peace and love it. All human beings of whatever colour, race and creed have a deep longing for peace, we are all connected on this level without any difference.

Rose Marie Gnausch chose the symbol of the elephant, borrowed from Indian mythology: God Ganesha is the strong, wise remover of obstacles. And we want strong peace and wise peace which lasts.

The response to Rose Marie's appeal worldwide was overwhelming: Artists from the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Korea, Israel, Germany above all, Austria, Luxemburg, Poland, and Italy answered. And many artists, students and children from all over Cyprus sent in their works. I would like to thank them all and Rose Marie for her strong belief in our peace potential.

I would like to thank all who helped realize this project: First of all the German Embassy for

their dynamic support. We are also grateful to the Embassies of Austria and Luxemburg. We thank the Nicosia Municipalities and all those friendly helpers on both sides of the divide...

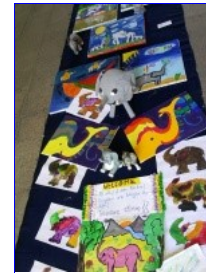


[Children in the North](#)

[Lefkosa North Opening](#)



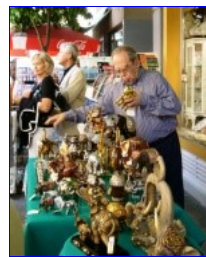
[Opening ceremony](#)



[The DrumInspire Band](#)



[Drummer in the South calling the drummer in the North](#)



[Shop owner selects one of his elephants to make a present to the Mayor of Nicosia](#)



[Guests listening to what is said](#)



[Haute Volée listening](#)



[Balloons in South Nicosia](#)



[Cocktail Party at the Information Centre](#)



[Ganesha the Elephant God](#)

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