

Go Ganesha Go Elephants for Peace had a beautiful beginning at Famagusta Gate on January 14 at 20:00.

Go Ganesha Go allows children and individuals from all walks of life and age to make a visual statement about their desire for a peaceful life on this planet.

The new common symbol for peace, now strong and majestic yet social and gentle: is the elephant. It is created to stand in areas where differences are apparent. The symbol acts as making those visible who desire a peaceful attitude and is acting on the premises itself., as a kind remover of obstacles.

Mrs. Woermann-Stylianou Head of the Goethe Center Nicosia and Daphne Trimikliniotis President of EKATE gave an insightful and moving introduction to the new civic art movement which puts art and public participation in the center of attention.

Many came to the opening. There was a relaxed and balanced situation. Both communities were present intermingled with an international community.

The Luxembourg ambassador made a special visit to the show and received a guided tour through the exhibition by Mrs. Woermann-Stylianou and the artists and the initiator of the project Rose Marie Gnausch. Mr. Bruch took the plane back to Athens that night assuring that he would support further Luxembourg contributions to the event on Ledra Street May 9 and 10.

Luxembourg artists Nico Hinckes and schoolchildren from Billek had contributed many charming elephant pictures to the show at Famagusta Gate.

Nico Hinckes extensive use of metal in his paintings reflected on his students where gold and copper was combined with red or green and silver combined with blue. On the splendid walls of the former city gate, they enhanced each other and functioned like modern icons for the new world desired.

The topic of the icon was also apparent in the collage-drawing of an elephant on gold ground by Rose Marie Gnausch. Like in a miniature combine painting the elephant was accompanied by gold leaf worked into white candle wax.

Paul Hunter from Quebec Canada sent a work combining abstraction of a gold and silver square with a small glass elephant sculpture.

When entering the exhibition the visitor was greeted by an elephant drawn into space. In Remembrance of Picassos light and metal drawings, Detlef Backhaus a Cologne based engineer and sculptor has created a seated elephant figure created out of filigree polyesterene holding up a sign reading Peace and Freedom. This charming figure was framed by an artist group from Bonn who each contributed a series of elephant oil paintings. IMKA an artist of the group had represented Cyprus at the Pavillion of the world Exposition in Hannover in 2000. She had been to Cyprus previously and had always dreamt to show her work at Famagusta Gate. She incorporated the building into her works, and elephant literally arriving at the gate of the edifice.

Guiding the viewer into the middle of the room where small elephant figures out of wood, designed and created by a group of adolescence. A Pre- Christmasworkshop entitled "Children Searching Peace" from a little village in Germany.

In the alcove of the room there where two charming elephant figures placed once more directly on the floor. One sawn and designed by Gertraut Scheuer from Austria, the

elephant is made out of an empty potato bag and filled with the hay from the Mosel river. Gertraut got so inspired that she produced several more and is starting a new brandname the "Moselfant".

Roland Michel a sculptor from the Eifel sculpted a wooden dwarf elephant dragging a giant "C" behind him. He refers to the elephants of Cyprus who had been living on the island in former times. His work is symbolically entitled "The Bridge".

In order to access the second room one literally had to pass through the work of Ute Lisa Roth, an economics teacher from Wittlich, Germany. On a white flag she drew two elephant figures facing each other and wrote a poem on the peaceful manners in English and German. Her statement was absorbed through the movement and stillness that the flag allowed, hinting at stormy times and quiet times and the need to work together. While entering the second room one was greeted once more by an seated elephant sculpture sitting on a low white pedestal on the floor. A soft sculpture in the style of Oldenburg it was sawn out of canvas and meant to be filled with local newspaper from both sides. In fact even more beautifully the sculpture had been literally been filled by a Greek and a Turkish Cypriot with wrapping material of the world wide contributions. Behind this canvas turned sculpture, was the powerful eye of Timbo, an African elephant photographed by star photographer Nomi Baumgarl from Munich/Hawai. Entitled "The wisdom of the Earth", it is the pendant to a photograph of the Eye of a Dolphin called the "Wisdom of the Water". Receiving the trust of this immense and powerful animal by letting her get so close and looking straight into her lenses, where are facing eye to eye the deep inner knowing of these old and wise mammals that have been living on our planet far longer than human kind. Nomi's work is to lift the veil and let us understand through the gaze of the animal the deeper sense of our existence.

On a glass table sat a small hand knitted elephant framed by young children's drawing. The knitted elephant had been created by Mrs. Fries a 83 year old lady from Greimerath, Germany. Through a newspaper article she had found out about the civic art movement and had immediately called the initiator letting her know that she is going to be part of the movement. "Where ever I can, I help" she explained to Rose Marie Gnausch, who went to pick up the contribution in person. Mrs. Fries used to be a farmer and later worker at a car producing company. Her attitude however steams from her desire to contribute to the world where ever she can. Mrs. Fries has 5 children and many grandchildren and although she gave up driving 3 months ago she is not ready to retire from live, she said.

Go Ganesha Go allows people from all walks of life and from around the world to come together at ease and making a collective statement of the peaceful attitude of most human beings on this planet.

On a long table where displayed long caravans of elephants of different material and size, donated from people who had not put their own hands into creating the new symbol, but with the same aim an elephant was given to the movement to make peace visible.

On a blue fabric on the floor were cut out elephant figures from the Realschule Schweich, Germany. On their figures the students had written rhythmic poems of elephants and their

peace inspiring nature. Here the children are allowed to speak passing us the message that aggression leads to more violence and that the elephant despite its size and power is gentle and living harmoniously with its surrounding. As the real king of the animal realm it does not need to exercise his power since naturally it is respected by all. As a vegetarian it does not need to kill and allows others to live their respective way.

In vicinity an unfolding piece/peace by Canadian artist Christina Stahr. The current Professor of Columbia University makes a statement about the unfolding, ongoing, developing process of peace by showing us a long and folded piece of paper with imprints of elephants, gold leaf and words of process in three languages.

In an window bay New York based artist Lise Kjaer, showed her model of the work designed for Ledra Street in May. A white elephant figure sawn with any stripes of his back, inviting the viewer to write his wish for peace on one of them.

Lise Kjaer originally from Denmark, has lived for 12 years in then communist ruled Poland and is currently Professor at City College New York.

Yvonne Over from New York has sent a pillow case and her dream of peace written in form of a poem.

The vice president of Laugh Yoga of Trier in Germany sent a funnel in form of an elephant to inspire laughter which is helping human kind in the most powerful way, she states.

At the back of the exhibition a slide showing the image of an elephant and a hare glancing at each other. Both came to the river bank, both are waiting. Veronika Weiss contributed the image together with a long text. She is referring to the strong and majestic figure of the elephant facing the fearful nature of the hare. A mediator in the health system of Germany, she used this image to talk about fears and insecurities of the one and the calmness of the other. Her text guides us towards an understanding of each other, since at times we are the hare and at other times the strong one.

It is the role of the elephant to offer the hare to drink first, a respect to the weaker one since only the elephant can allow the hare to drink not the other way around.

This image has been in practical use for decades and was now offered to find its place in the new movement.

The president of EMMA, Nilgun Guney and three of her students were equally participating with her elephant works. A white elephant in a blooming field, a green and red elephant as well as an elephant incorporating fragments of a mirror. Below works from students of the American Academy, artists and children side by side, shown on an equal footing. Merve Arakan had organized a workshop prior to the show and showed photos of children and artworks on a large panel.

All artworks blended into the concept and gave a harmonic sound.

This was reflected on the visitors of the opening night. Groups and individuals gathered in both rooms and stayed and conversed until late at night.

The Austrian Ambassador Dr. Eva Hager stayed for two hours and offered her support for further artistic contributions from Austria. Ceramic artist Brigitte Saughsted from Vienna

and her Canadian husband had flew in especially for the event. They were able to set up their work themselves and designed a beautiful table with a Ganesha and dancing elephant figures. They had heard about the project from a friend who had simply found the project by googling the word ganesha. They decided to participate, scheduled a flight and within four days they celebrated their first visit to Cyprus, the opening of the exhibition, her twenty-three anniversary and Brigitte's birthday. The project allows people within the country and from around the world a platform to express their desire for a peaceful live on earth.

We are happy to see you on May 9-10 on Ledra Street on both sides of the checkpoint and make sure to tell everybody.

For further information see: www.elephantsforpeace.com

www.go-ganesha-go.com or write us an email at participate@go-ganesha-go.com

Already the show was made visible on you tube by Edward Saugstedt
"Go Ganesha Go Elephants for Peace"