

Making Peace on Earth, if Only on Paper

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A single burning candle, wrapped in barbed wire. A gun that fires only flowers. A flag made of banners from many nations.



A drawing by Maumi Nalindika of Sri Lanka, from "Pieces for Peace."

These images, from Pakistan, Namibia and the United States, were created as answers to the question "What do you know about peace?" Now at the JCC in Manhattan, they and more than 200 other drawings, paintings and collages make up a striking exhibition organized by CityArts, a nonprofit New York City group. Devoted to making public artworks dealing with civic and social issues, CityArts contacted more than 500 schools worldwide, asking them to take part. The results, "Pieces for Peace Mosaic With Youth From Around the World," includes art from more than a dozen countries, created by students ages 8 to 20.

Some of the images in the exhibition are purely pastoral; others acknowledge that peace has many meanings. A child identified only as Eshan, 9, of Sri Lanka, has drawn a globe and praying hands. Above are the words "No More Tsunami."

Certain pictures refer to specific conflicts, including the war in Iraq. A drawing by Natali Ohayon, 15, of Israel, portrays a crippled, crying dove, pushing what looks like a walker, whose wheels have symbols of Israel and Palestine. Above is written in English, "Although she is old, she still have hope ..."

Still others are haunting. One labeled just "Noori, Pakistan," is titled "... Piece?" It shows a globe, roughly loaf-shaped, cut open on a plate, a large knife beside it. And Bettina Amatori, 20, of Italy, has drawn a drab brown room. Below an exit sign, light shines through a half-open door. The door is labeled Peace.

The show includes a guide that invites children to comment, correspond with some of the artists (e-mail addresses are given) and create their own drawings. (The project still accepts contributions; more are at cityarts.org/p4p_project/index.htm.) Viewed together the works are poignant reminders of the gap between what the young can imagine and what adults can achieve.

"Pieces for Peace," through Sept. 6 at the JCC in Manhattan, 334 Amsterdam Avenue, at 76th Street, (646) 505-4493. Hours: Mondays through Thursdays, 5:30 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Fridays, to 10 p.m.; Saturdays, 1 to 10 p.m.; Sundays, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Free.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/25/arts/25fami.html?_r=3&adxnnl=1&oref=slogin&adxnnlx=1156514561-aDIW301RH33Pvs1B34dyZQ&oref=slogin&oref=slogin