

Press release

10 December 2008

Foster + Partners and Ben Johnson collaborate to create a sculpture for education and peace

As Martti Ahtisaari arrived in Oslo to collect the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize, a customised sculpture representing children's hopes and creativity arrived in Norway, carrying a message of peace.

Through Foster + Partners involvement with both Save the Children and with the Campaign for Drawing, the practice has been involved in the realisation of this unique sculpture. Ben Johnson, artist and long-time collaborator, was invited to create a simple sculpture to tie into Save the Children's Rewrite the Future campaign.

Save the Children, as part of its Rewrite the Future campaign, launched a global debate on the relationship between peace and education in March 2008, with children at the forefront of the debate. Children from around the world were encouraged to create their own paper doves of peace displaying their messages of peace, and drawings of hopes for a better future.

These doves of peace, created by children, provided the inspiration for the sculpture. Doves created by children from UK, Indonesia, DRC and Palestine accompanied the sculpture, in addition to a handmade book of doves illustrated by children, which was designed by Thomas Manss & Company and explains the background to the project.

The sculpture comprises two small white cardboard panels which slot together to create a three-dimensional dove. The simple cardboard dove is a representation of a blank dove on which children draw their hopes and dreams.

The model has a conical stainless steel base, etched with the names of 31 Nobel Peace Prize previous winners of the Nobel Peace Prize who agreed to sign their name to the sculpture as a message that education can promote peace.

Ahtisaari added his voice to the support for education for peace when questioned on stage by 11 year old Matilde; Mr. Ahtisaari, if every person in the world was educated, do you think there would still be wars? Peace negotiator, former teacher, and Nobel Peace Prize winner Martti Ahtisaari's reply: There is nothing more important than education.

It is hoped that, following his statement of support for education, Martti Ahtisaari will also sign his name to the sculpture and it will become part of a permanent exhibition at the Nobel Peace Centre in Oslo and travel around the world as a message of peace.

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Campaign for Drawing is a charity that examines drawing as a common language and promotes its use as a tool for advocacy, giving children a voice. www.thebigdraw.org.uk

Save the Children is the worlds leading independent childrens rights organisation, with members in 27 countries and operational programmes in 120. Save the Children fights for childrens rights and delivers lasting improvements to childrens lives worldwide. www.savethechildren.net/rewritethefuture

Ben Johnson is an artist based in London: <http://www.benjohnsonartist.com/>

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