KKSD – Cyprus Paper Art Association Workshop and Exhibition

Paper Pencil as Symbol for Environment and Culture

at Rüstem Bookstore, Nicosia, Feb 29 – March 14, 2020

By Heidi Trautmann

In an atmosphere of books, silent but most important culture of humanity, members and guests of the KKSD had gathered around huge tables covered in paper of all sorts and tools for the job, to work on a symbol, another symbol of culture, of humanity, of the arts and education to make a statement as association …. I am breathless after this long sentence but there is so much contained in it that one does not know where to start first.

Let us start with the beginning. In December 2019, the old president of the association, Ismet Tatar, one of the founding members, handed over the office to her successor elected, Dr. Eser Keçeci who presently works for ARUCAD University, a step which presented at the same time a change of generation, let the young ones take over. Now, this present workshop and exhibition was her first KKSD art project which she carried out with the help and on the basis of an art project of our member Dr. Roya Alagheband, who works for CIU Cyprus International University in the Department of Communication and Design. Both ladies are artists in their own right.

The venue, where the event took place, is one of the oldest bookstores in Cyprus, a historical site in Nicosia, it was established in 1937 by Kemal Rüstem who also started publishing books as from the late 1950s. His son Ali Rüstem has now tried to go along with the development of modern times and has combined the world of books with the world of arts through workshops and exhibitions; the recently established artrooms of very fine architecture have seen exquisite exhibitions. Ali Rüstem offered the upstairs rooms - usually hosting guests for typical Cypriot cuisine - to the association for one day’s workshop with an exhibition following. What can artists wish more for than being surrounded by books to become stimulated for creation.

The idea, the project is based upon, was developed by Roya Alagheband with the wish to create a symbol for the protection of nature, a symbol to demonstrate that trees must not fall for the sake of our pencils, to hold the graphite leads, they can just as well be covered by paper. Directly connected with it is to make use of waste paper such as newspaper, wrapping paper, napkins, old books and others.

I would like to lead the idea even further, I see the pencil as such as a symbol to admonish society, especially the young generation, to treasure the practice of writing and reading literature, to further the practice of handwriting and pencil drawing before our fingers forget how to use them except for typing messages into our telephones.

With the help of some members of the association, Eser Keçeci organized the event and it has been a most pleasurable day to work together, and it was exciting to see creative ideas spring up, after we were shown the basic technique how to tightly roll the lead into the paper with glue so it became hard as wood; on the other end even rubber could be added. There were pencils created with emperor’s blue and true gold attached, there were others covered with rose petals, pencils became alive as big insects with wings attached. Others wrote small messages on it, glued photos on the narrow surface, and very special ones became little sculptures.

The exhibition on the Tuesday, following the workshop, was delightful, it was stimulating to see these small objects become important messages. On the final day of the exhibition it is planned to hold an auction, the symbols for environment and culture may be acquired for a donation in order to help our General Hospital in Nicosia that had one important department go up in flames just recently with victims to deplore.

Further note on the auction will be given separately.