

Writers and Illustrators of the World Join to Create Peace Story

Nami Island Republic of South Korea for
International Books for Young People IBBY



Twenty- two authors, twenty two illustrators from twenty two countries engaged in an international cooperative to create a unique anthology, ‘Peace Story’ for young people. David Vivian Russell one of Australia’s leading counter-tenors and an expert in Baroque music, Editor of Australia’s only classical music magazine *Fine Music* was the design and editorial supervisor of ‘Peace Story. Respected academic author on Irish children’s literature Valerie Coglan and Irish Laureate for Children’s literature Siobhan Parkinson, were the co-editors of *Peace Story*.

Peace Story was part of the Nami Island International Children’s Book Festival South Korea which was first held in 2005 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Hans Christian Andersen. It is a six week bi-annual festival of children’s books, environment and peace featuring outstanding exhibitions of children’s books and illustrations from all over the world. Much loved Korean illustrator Kang Woo-hyon President of the Nambook International Committee headed the *Peace Story* project with the support of the Nami Island Minn family who published, translated some of the stories and hosted the authors and illustrators on Nami Island. It was supported by National YMCA Korea, UNICEF and UNESCO Korea, Korean Ministry of Culture, Sport and

Tourism and Nami Island the official sponsor of the IBBY Hans Christian Anderson Awards.

My Australian story 'To East Timor with Love Australia', illustrated by the award winning Frane Lessac opens the anthology *Peace Story*. Frane Lessac's vibrant colours of bright pink bougainvillea and yellow centred frangipanis create a visual representation of loss of homeland through war, but also hope for the future. The Peace Story collection ends with a beautiful verse story, 'A plum for Peace' by Pam Munoz Ryan. Caldecott Medal winner Eric Rohmann illustrated Ryan's work using soft water colours depicting a child seeking that elusive 'plum' of peace.

The South Korean story 'Recalling a Musk Deer' written by international award winning poet and children's author Kim Jin-kyung translated by Fred Minn is a story of the separation of North and South Korea. Illustrator Kim Jae-hong's depiction of the soldiers in the demilitarized zone and the hurt deer that brings them together is profoundly moving, especially at this time of military conflict in Korea.

The German writer Franz Hohler's 'The Dove' was translated by Siobhan Parkinson. Illustrated by the Gustav Heinemann Peace Award winner Reinhard Michl, 'The Dove' is deeply touching and although the shortest piece in the collection, it unites words and art in a voyage of peace:-

'A dove flew over the battlefield and was torn
To shreds by the blades of the helicopter.

One of its feathers fluttered into the
garden of a house, and was picked up by
a child.

'We'll only take what is absolutely necessary,
.....

The child took the feather.’

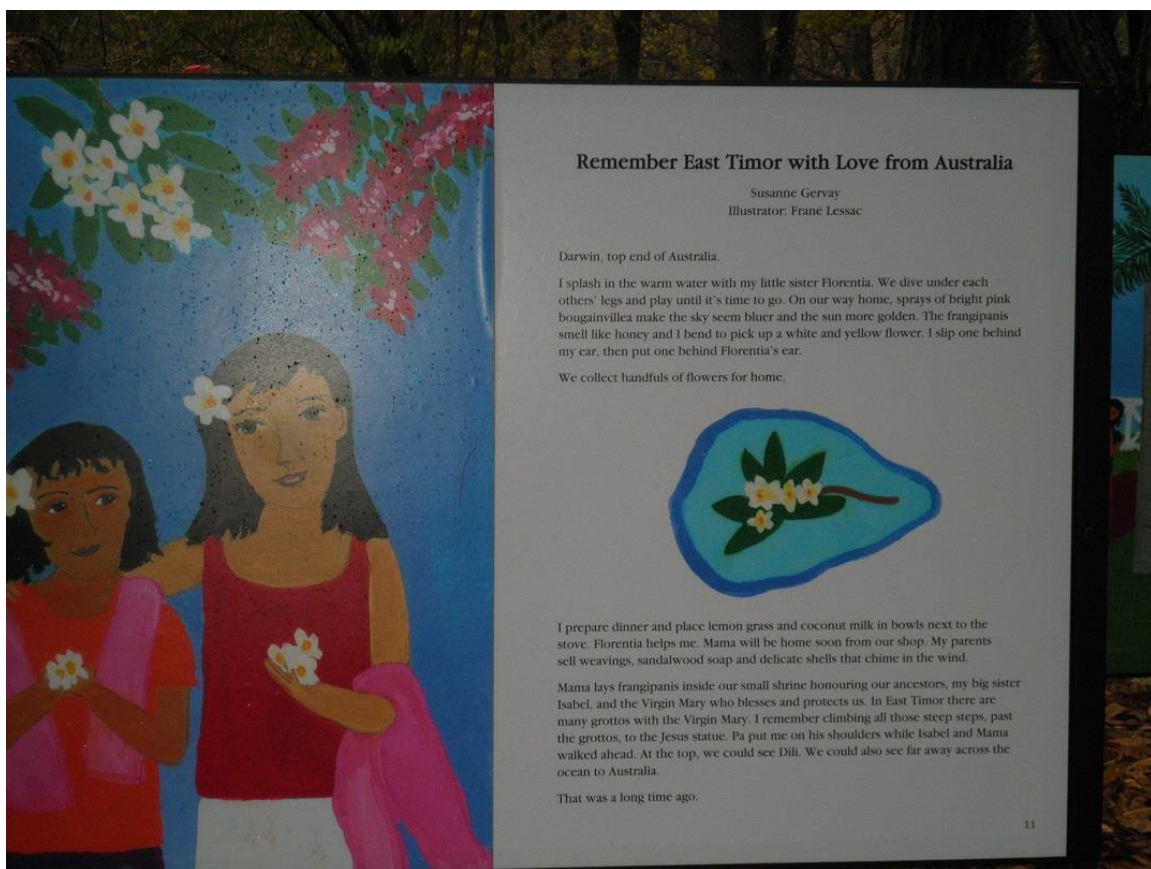
Renowned Lithuanian children’s author Gendrutis Morkunas, who was dying as he wrote this story of peace, was honored posthumously at the Nami Island Festival in a retrospective exhibition. Morkunas was committed to his story as his last creative work written for young people and a better world.

The stories and illustrations are as varied as the countries they come from ranging from Sudan, Uganda, Greece, Turkey, Malaysia, China, Iran, Bolivia, New Zealand, Pakistan, to Brazil.

The Nami Island Children’s Book Festival featured bill boards of each story in English and Korean with photos of their authors and illustrators. The Peace Gallery exhibited the original artworks from Peace Story. Frane Lessac and I spoke to packed audiences of Korean writers and artists with Fred Minn translating. Peace drawings from children from Iran, Korea, Sudan and all over the world were exhibited in a hall overflowing with books. The UNICEF pavilion was filled with visiting children, books and hundreds of hand made dolls. I purchased one beautiful doll with its handmade Korean dress – ‘Adopt a doll, save a child.’ I hope I have saved a child. Nami Island is about saving the environment, empowering young people with books, creativity and embracing peace.

Nami Island held so many experiences - the extraordinary illustrations and books of the ‘Hello, Dear Enemy’ Exhibition from International Youth Library, Munich Germany in the Hans Christian Anderson Hall; recycled sculptures throughout the island; World Children’s Picture-book Library in the Forests; freely wandering ostriches and fluffy eared squirrels; forests of crimson, silver, yellow mestasequoia, silver birch, ginkgo, cherry and tulip. Wherever I wandered on the island, there were drawings and words from artists and writers. Frane Lessac and I selected a beautiful large rock. Frane drew scenes of trees and flowers and I wrote the words from my book, *The Cave* – ‘War is not brave, but men can be brave in war and in life.’

Peace Story on Nami Island was an international experience of friendship and peace. One evening we painted with Kang Woo-hyon in his studio with the warm and wonderful Spanish illustrator and author Xan Lopez Dominguez. We laughed late into the night. There were afternoon teas with the Senegal Consul; Korean banquets with French film makers visiting from China; morning tea with Thai delegates; school kids giggling with me in the UNICEF pavilion; Korean dancing; books everywhere; and I bowed as a courtesy and thanked the Koreans for their hospitality and commitment to international youth literature. I thanked them for ‘Peace Story’.



*Billboard featuring Susanne Gervay's story and illustration by Frane Lessac.
www.sgervay.com*

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