



**International Network of
Museums for Peace**

Celebrating Founders & Funders of Peace Museums: Dayton International Peace Museum

The earliest peace museums – the International Museum of War and Peace in Lucerne, Switzerland (1902), and the First International Anti-War Museum in Berlin (1925) – were founded and also largely funded by Jan Bloch and Ernst Friedrich, respectively. Without their inspiring vision, courage, dedication, and personal sacrifice these pioneering educational institutions would not have been realised. Many of the peace museums established in more recent times owe their origin likewise to the vision and efforts of committed individuals. Often it has been their experience of war which turned them into passionate campaigners for peace and promoters, especially, of peace education. Examples are the Peace Museum Lindau, and the Peace History Museum in Hindelang, both established by Thomas Wechs. Also in Germany, Hans Peter Kürten created the Bridge at Remagen Peace Museum. In Austria, the First Austrian Peace Museum in Wolfsegg was the brainchild of Franz Deutsch, the European Peace Museum in Stadtschlaining came about through Gerald Mader, and the Peace Museum Vienna through Liska Blodgett. The Yi Jun Peace Museum in The Hague is the lifework of Kee-Hang Lee & Chang-joo Song. Many of the smaller peace museums in Japan, such as Grassroots House in Kochi City, established by Shigeo Nishimori, owe

their existence likewise to private initiative and benevolence. This also explains the origins of the Peace Museum in Chicago created by Mark Rogovin and Marjorie Craig Benton, and the Dayton International Peace Museum.



Chris and Ralph Dull (Photo credit: Dayton International Peace Museum)

The Dayton International Peace Museum in Ohio was founded by Chris and Ralph Dull in 2004 and remains the country's only peace museum. Thanks to their continuing support as well as the efforts of many volunteers, the museum completed its 15th year as 2019 came to an end. The museum launched an appeal for donations which at the same time was also meant as a way of honouring its founders. As an indication of their unstinting

commitment to the museum, Ralph and Chris Dull offered to double all donations made in December up to a total of \$ 15,000. In order to meet the challenges and allow the museum to continue and expand its important work, it has recently established a new fund for peace, [The Dayton Foundation](#). Thanks to generous donations from the Studebaker Family and the Friends of Englewood, the museum's Peace Hero Exhibit will be expanded and become interactive. [Click here](#) for more information.



The Dayton Museum and the City of Dayton have recently joined an international coalition, *Peace In Our Cities*. Launched on International Peace Day 2019, this is an initiative to reduce urban violence by 50% by the year 2030 to which a number of cities and international NGOs have signed up. Globally, 82% of deadly violence occurs outside conflict zones, much of it concentrated in urban settings (where half of the world's population live). Modelled after the [C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group](#), the *Peace In Our Cities* campaign seeks to become a preeminent organising body to address one of today's most pressing challenges. It is meant to accelerate action toward Sustainable Development Goal 16 ([SDG16](#)). For more information, [click here](#) and [here](#).

(See also articles below by Vittorio Pallotti, founder of the International Pacifist Poster Documentation Center near Bologna; by Judith Stauber, founder of the Los Alamos-Japan Institute in New Mexico; and on the Center for the Study of Political Graphics in Culver City, CA, founded by Carol A. Wells).



Signing the 'Peace In Our Cities' pledge

News from the Tehran Peace Museum

By Sahar Tafreshi, International Relations Officer, Tehran Peace Museum

In November, two volunteers of Tehran Peace Museum (TPM) participated in the 'Science for all' festival organised by the country's National Science Museum. The festival provides people with an opportunity to gain knowledge about different aspects of science. In a presentation about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Ms Farzaneh Nazari addressed its application in such areas as agriculture, health and water resource management. She also discussed the nuclear disasters in Hiroshima, Chernobyl and Fukushima. A digital art exhibition on artwork related to the consequences of using weapons of mass destruction by Ms Mona Badamchizadeh was held with the support of TPM and Iran's National Science Museum. Two paintings from the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum's collection were also digitally displayed. The above are two examples showing the contribution of volunteers of the TPM towards raising people's awareness regarding the effects of weapons of mass destruction.



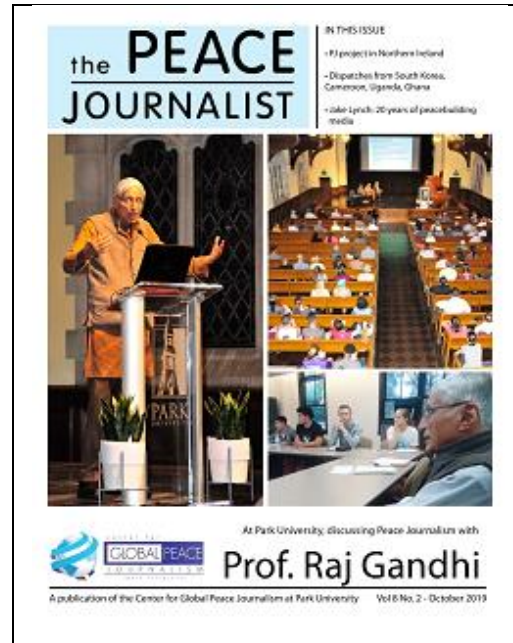
Ms Farzaneh Nazari, giving a presentation about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy

A ‘Peace Reporting Simulation’ workshop was held by TPM, together with the Peace Reporters Association and the Iranian Association for Peace Studies, on 27th – 28th December. The first day focused on the basics and principles of peace reporting, demonstrating how reporters can prevent bias and escalation. The second day dealt with principles of humanitarian law, the need to protect civilians and not to attack civilian places, and the protection of journalists. The programme also included a discussion of the political history of Afghanistan and the process of peace negotiations between the US and the Taliban.



TPM's 'Peace Reporting Simulation' workshop

This served as preparation for a peace reporting simulation on those negotiations. Participants were divided into several groups and reported on the topics they had studied during the workshop. Participants received a certification at the conclusion of the successful workshop.



(Editorial note: Readers may be interested to learn about *The Peace Journalist* magazine, published by the Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University in Parkville, Missouri, US. For more information, [click here](#) and [here](#)).

Los Alamos-Japan Institute, New Mexico, US

By Dr. Judith Stauber, Director, Los Alamos-Japan Institute

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the world’s first and only use of atomic weapons in warfare. Locations of discovery and devastation – Los Alamos, Hiroshima and Nagasaki – remain places of conscience forever connected by a shared legacy. The Los Alamos-Japan Institute (LAJI) promotes a unique brand of inclusion and empathy. We can both remember Pearl Harbour and acknowledge the suffering of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. – The global histories of the US and Japan are permanently linked, but deep divisions remain. The LAJI was established to enhance the communications of more diverse content through US-Japan cultural

exchanges, programmes, lectures and exhibits.



The LAJI is keen to build bridges of understanding with global partners including students, educators, artists, scientists, *hibakusha*/atomic bomb survivors, historians, nuclear defence staff, policymakers, filmmakers, museum professionals, and others interested in civil dialogue in the US and Japan. The LAJI engages multiple global perspectives and multigenerational communities to advance mutual understanding of a more complex and holistic story of the atomic bomb. My expertise in intercultural communication fuels a passion to connect places of conscience that share history, but little mutual understanding. Believing strongly in bearing witness to history so that it is never repeated, I negotiated and delivered proclamations of understanding to Hiroshima and Nagasaki on behalf of Los Alamos County to honour the historic friendship I established as Los Alamos History Museum Director (2011-2018). In 2018 I founded the Institute with a distinguished global advisory board including Clifton Truman Daniel, President Harry Truman's oldest grandson. Among the Japanese members is Masahiro Sasaki, Sadako Sasaki's older brother who survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima

and later established the Sadako Legacy Project. For more information, [click here](#).

(Also see under Recent Publications, below)



Masahiro Sasaki

Atomic Alert! Exhibition

An exhibition entitled *Atomic Alert! Confronting 'The Bomb' in the New Atomic Age* is being shown, 20th March – 6th May, in the Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, Massachusetts. It explores the American government's efforts during the Cold War era – when the world was divided between two nuclear-armed states, the US and the USSR – to educate citizens about what to do before, during and after an atomic attack. A special feature of the exhibition is 'When the bomb falls', a large interactive device which allows visitors to explore the impact of a nuclear blast on a geographic area.

The Museum of Russian Icons was inaugurated in 2008 and is based on the collection of a local businessman. It aims to enhance relations between Russia and the US through the medium of art, especially Russian icons. It seems that no other exhibition in the museum could have been further removed from Russian icons than the present one on the atomic bomb. For more information, go to [this link](#) and also [click here](#).



Amnesia Atomica Sculpture Unveiled in Mexico City

A large inflatable mushroom cloud designed by Mexican artist Pedro Reyes was unveiled on 14th February at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Place of the three cultures) in one of Mexico City's most historic neighbourhoods. A continuation of his previous work on disarmament, the ca. 10-meter tall sculpture will function as a beacon that brings experts, political leaders, and engaged citizens together to address nuclear threats. The sculpture will travel to New York in May in conjunction with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference at the United Nations. The work of art was commissioned by the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*.

An earlier, famous art project by Reyes is called 'Shovels from Guns' (*Palas por Pistolas*). This was initiated in Culiacán, a city in western Mexico with the highest rate of gun deaths in the country. After contacting family members of victims, and together with the local botanical garden and local TV station, he organised a campaign, inviting citizens to hand in guns in exchange for a coupon that they could use to obtain electronics or household appliances. He collected 1,527 guns (40% of which were

high power automatic weapons of exclusively military use), had them melted down and then transformed into 1,527 shovels that were subsequently used to plant 1,527 trees. The latter involved adults as well as children. With this project Reyes wanted to show how an agent of death can become an agent of life. Afterwards, the shovels were donated to schools and art institutions in several countries for the use of community members.



For more information, [go here](#) and also [here](#).



Tree-planting with 'Shovels from Guns'

A slide show of the 'conversion' process can be [seen here](#). (For a previous article on the artist and his conversion work, see Newsletter No. 16, September 2016, p. 6).

The National Museum of American Diplomacy

The mission of the National Museum of American Diplomacy, currently under development in Washington, DC, is to tell

‘the story of the history, practice, and challenges of American diplomacy’. Through exhibitions and programmes, the museum aims to ‘inspire the American public to discover diplomacy and how it impacts their lives every day’. It will be ‘the first museum to give visitors unprecedented access to the untold stories of how diplomacy has been instrumental to our success as a nation, and how it continues to influence our lives today’. The museum, located at the US Department of State (Harry S. Truman building), is a public-private partnership between the State Department and the Diplomacy Center Foundation. Funds are currently being raised for its completion; so far, donations have been received from major American corporations and foundations, as well as from several countries (Brunei, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE). For more information, see [this link](#) and [go here](#).

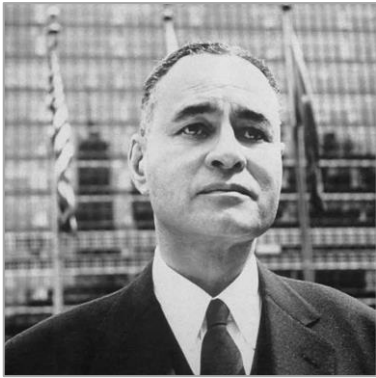
A selection of the museum’s 8,500 artefacts (and growing) can be seen at [this link](#). An online exhibition entitled *The rise and fall of the Berlin Wall* can be seen [here](#). To get a further taste of the content of the future museum, a preview exhibit is being shown, entitled *Diplomacy is our mission*. The subtitle – ‘Advancing American national security, economic prosperity, and global leadership’ – seems to suggest that the museum’s overriding motto is ‘America First!’ An earlier attempt at showing ‘Atomic diplomacy’ – a large exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, on the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1995 – failed to go ahead because of objections by the US Congress and US veterans and resulted in the dismissal of the Institution’s director. (See also the next article).



Exhibition 'Diplomacy Is Our Mission'

Exhibition about 'A Hero of US Diplomacy': Dr. Ralph Bunche

In September 2019, the US Department of State launched a new initiative called *Heroes of US Diplomacy*. Over the following year, the Department will highlight modern-day ‘heroes among us’ alongside heroes from its own rich history. Among the latter is Dr. Ralph Bunche (1904-1971), the Department’s first African American Desk Officer who played a major role in the formation of the United Nations and who became a UN Under-Secretary-General in 1955 with special responsibility for decolonisation and human rights issues. For his mediation in the Arab-Israeli War in 1948 he was awarded the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize (the first person of colour to be so honoured). Bunche, the grandson of a freed slave, was involved in the civil rights struggle in the US all his life while working for peace in troubled regions around the world.



Dr. Ralph Bunche

On 27th February a ceremony in Dr. Bunche’s honour took place at the National Museum of American Diplomacy featuring a panel of experts on his life and work as well as an exhibition about him and his legacy, curated by the Foreign Service Institute, the Office of the Historian, and the Museum. Already in 1997, the State Department had renamed its library (the oldest one in the US federal government, founded in 1789 by the first Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson) for Ralph Bunche in recognition of his many outstanding diplomatic contributions.



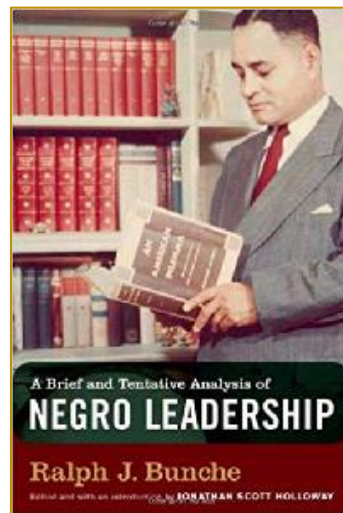
Dr. Ralph Bunche with Martin Luther King, Jr. & Coretta Scott King (Credit: UN Photo).

In 1980 a monumental, towering 20-ton obelisk by noted African American sculptor Daniel LaRue Johnson was formally dedicated to Bunche in New York and a plaque at the monument was unveiled by his widow. The project had been endorsed by a resolution of the US Congress which also contributed to its financing. To learn more, [click here](#) and [here](#).



Ralph Bunche monument by Daniel LaRue Johnson

For more information “Heroes of U.S. Diplomacy”, [click here](#) and [here](#). A short (4-minute), excellent video, with historic footage, *Ralph Bunche: Hero for Peace*, can be viewed at [this link](#); also listen to [The Legacy of Ralph Bunche in his own words](#).



Exhibition ‘So that the past does not occur again – From Comiso missiles to the Berlin wall’

By Vittorio Pallotti, Founder, International Pacifist Poster Documentation Center - IPPDC (House of Peace ‘La Filanda’), Casalecchio di Reno, Bologna, Italy

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall (1989), the 70th anniversary of the foundation of NATO, and of the first Soviet nuclear bomb test (1949), the ‘International Pacifist Poster Documentation Center-IPPDC’ in the House

of Peace ‘La Filanda’ in Casalecchio di Reno (Bologna) selected 40 posters for a new itinerant exhibition titled *Not walls but bridges*. At the same time, another exhibition was made consisting of 140 photos (110 by Bruno Stefani, 30 by me) and titled, *Remember the past ... the Euromissiles – photo exhibition on non-violent struggles at Comiso (Sicily, 1981-1984)*. Both exhibitions, closely integrated, have been shown at Casalecchio di Reno and Zola Predosa (Bologna), under the title *So that the past does not occur again – From Comiso missiles to the Berlin wall*.



Poster of President Obama cutting the wire-net fencing of the US base ‘Dal Molin’ near Vicenza (2009); it was produced by a movement resisting the expansion of this important base and demanding its closure

The first exhibition contrasts images of walls and bridges. From times immemorial, walls – materially as well as metaphorically – have been built to separate realities: obstructing or expecting to stop the migration of people who are at high risk of surviving and who were compelled by powerful, rich and armed minorities to submit to war, hunger, and fear. In contrast, the peculiar architectural function of bridges is to provide links between two banks of a river which, even expressed metaphorically, represent two different ‘worlds’, viz., of those who are emigrating and of those who are receiving. Today, bridges can therefore be considered as

representing ‘rescue operations’, ‘humanitarian assistance’, providing welfare and social integration for migrant peoples. The poster exhibition, *Not walls but bridges*, shows a selection of many activities which mobilise mass society year after year.

The exhibition *Remember the past ...* relates the facts of a famous peace campaign in Sicily in the 1980s to the youth of today. The campaign took place at a time when many people were afraid of a nuclear war (and the end of the world) and reacted by initiating and becoming involved in struggles all over the world against atomic rearmament. It is, partly and chiefly, thanks to those movements that the agreement came about between US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev (1987) on the dismantling of the middle-range Pershing, Cruise and SS-20 missiles in Europe. Two years later, it was followed by the demolition of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Eastern and Western Germany.



Poster of the ‘Bridge at Remagen’ Peace Museum

Will the ‘builders of bridges’ be able to face up to and defeat the leaders of powerful countries involved in the building of walls and the production of weapons destroying mankind? Will they be able to give priority to humanitarian assistance, economic cooperation and ecological sustainability in

order to safeguard people from world-wide unforeseen events which might compel them to abandon their native countries? In conclusion, I would like to mention my answer to the question ‘And you - which wall would you like to demolish?’ that the Italian newspaper *Il Manifesto* asked its readers last year: ‘I would like to demolish the wall of silence of the media about non-violence and about alternatives to the dangerous and costly “armed peace”, and to start considering proven alternatives for an efficient prevention of all wars and armed conflicts’. This is a message and an appeal that should be loudly proclaimed in peace exhibitions and peace museums.

Center for the Study of Political Graphics: Celebrating 30 Years of Art & Resistance

The Center for the Study of Political Graphics (CSPG) in Culver City, California, is an educational and research archive that collects, preserves, documents, and exhibits posters relating to historical and contemporary movements for social change.



The Center uses its more than 90,000 protest, anti-war and human rights posters and prints to create thematic exhibitions, both travelling and online, as well as publications. It is advancing the power of political art to educate and inspire people to action. The collection, which has been built up over three decades and continues to grow, is one of the most diverse visual resources in the world. CSPG includes posters from the 19th century (such as rare lithograph caricatures by Honoré Daumier) and the largest collection

of post-World War II posters in the US. So far, nearly 4,100 posters are available to view online. In order to make the resource as representative as possible of the many historical as well as ongoing struggles that continue to take place around the world, CSPG depends on the donation of posters.

The Center was founded by art historian (and executive director), Carol A. Wells. Since 1981 she has produced over 100 political poster exhibitions and written many articles and catalogue essays on political poster art. The CSPG website contains an impressive list of publications, including reviews of exhibitions, which can all be downloaded. An informative and interesting interview with her, titled *85,000 of the world's angriest political posters are sitting in Culver City* (published in *LA Weekly* in 2015) can be found at [this link](#).



Carol A. Wells at CSPG (Photo credit: Danny Liao)

In a similarly fascinating ten-minute [youtube video](#), Wells tells the story of the poster that changed her life, and the important role of posters in, especially, developing countries to get messages across to the illiterate and very poor. Many travelling exhibitions can be seen on the website (see next article). [Click here](#) for more information.



Travelling Exhibition *MasterPeaces*

The Center for the Study of Political Graphics (CSPG, see article above) has produced more than two dozen theme-based exhibitions using original, vintage posters of which eleven are available online. For each exhibition, there is an explanatory guide. They are on such subjects as 'Art Against Empire: Graphic Responses to US Interventions Post-World War II', 'Solidarity Forever: Graphics from the International Labour Movement', 'Globalize This! – International Graphics of Resistance', 'Out of the Closet and into the Streets: Posters on LGBTQ Struggles and Celebrations'. These exhibitions can be seen [here](#). Of particular interest is [Masterpeaces: High Art for Higher Purposes](#). The imaginative, often striking images in the posters in this exhibition reproduce or make use of earlier, often famous art – such as Picasso's Gernika painting or Munch's 'The Scream', or the Pieta sculpture by Michelangelo. However, the focus is on contemporary issues including anti-war, anti-nuclear, ecology, women's rights. The alteration can be as simple as placing text over an original work of art to change its context and meaning.



Poster produced by Lambert Studios, Inc., US, 1969

In 'War is good business – Invest your son', the icon of a mother's grief over her slain son (in Michelangelo's marble Pieta, 1499) has been transformed into a poignant protest against the Vietnam War. The text which has been added parodies advertising slogans, war profiteering, and the military-industrial complex. Over 58,000 US soldiers and several million Vietnamese were killed. Another example is the way in which Leonardo da Vinci's painting, the Mona Lisa (1503), has been imaginatively altered to promote the rights of the disabled.

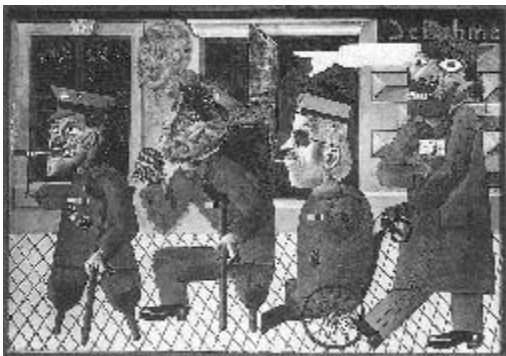


Nobody is perfect, by Klaus Staeck, Germany, 1981

Centenary of *The War Cripples* by Otto Dix (1920)

The First (and at the same time, last) International Dada Fair in Berlin was held in June-August 1920. The dada movement had its origins in Zurich in 1916 through German artists in exile during World War I. In Berlin, works by giants of the new art movement such as George Grosz and John Heartfield were displayed. The exhibition amounted to a rejection of bourgeois art and the dada revolt inspired the subsequent development

of modern art such as Pop Art, Concept Art and Surrealism. The items displayed consisted of paintings, watercolours, drawings, collages, posters, book jackets, advertisements, and dada newspapers. The main exhibition room was dominated by two large oil paintings. A painting by Grosz, *Germany – a winter's tale*, was an attack on three pillars of German society, viz. the church, the military, and the schools which had all been complicit in poisoning the minds of citizens and preparing them for what turned out to be a catastrophic war.



Otto Dix, '45% Fit for Work!' (1920)

On the wall opposite was a painting by Otto Dix (1891-1969), *War Cripples*, which he titled *45% Fit for Work!* It showed a grotesque procession of four German war veterans in full military dress marching along a city street. Such horrifically maimed and disfigured men were far from uncommon in Germany (and other countries) after World War I when 80,000 German amputees returned home from the front. In this painting, the artist leaves no one unscathed: he damns the military for butchering his generation, the public for its fascination with these reconstituted men, and the cripples themselves for their undiminished national pride.

The largest of the several anti-war pictures Dix made in 1920, *War Cripples* was one of the most criticised works shown in the Berlin Dada Fair. In 1927, the painting was acquired by the city of Dresden's art museum. Ten years later, the same painting was

prominently displayed and vilified in Munich at the infamous 1937 Nazi-exhibition of 'Degenerate Art'. Its caption read, 'An insult to the German heroes of the World War'. It is believed that it was destroyed by the Nazis in 1942.

Twenty-five years ago (1995), the National Gallery in Berlin acquired another anti-war painting that Dix had made in 1920 and that also featured crippled veterans of World War I. Dix, himself a veteran of World War I, had come across three mutilated former soldiers playing skat (a card-game) in a Dresden cafe. They are without arms and legs, and with ruined faces and prostheses. It is widely regarded as one of the most powerful anti-war statements ever made. For more information, [go here](#) and [here](#).



Otto Dix, *The Skat Players* (1920)

Visualizing Peace

The current issue of *Peace & Change: A Journal of Peace Research* (Vol. 45, No. 1, January 2020) is a special issue devoted to the theme, 'Visualizing Peace – The State of the Art'. The introductory article by the editors is followed by articles on 'peace aesthetics', 'making peace visible: colours in visual peace research', 'narratives of peace in the Afghanistan film *A War*', 'visual

metaphors of peace in the movie *Mango Dream*. It is surprising, and disappointing, that there is no article on the visualisation of peace in peace museums or museums for peace; indeed, there is not even a mention of such museums, or of peace exhibitions, or peace monuments. This is in spite of the fact that there is a sizeable literature documenting and analysing such various ways of visualising peace. Even though several of the contributors are German, one searches in vain for a reference to any of the pioneering studies by Hans-Martin Kaulbach.

A quick search on the internet brings up articles such as '[Visualizing Women Peace Activists](#)' (the travelling exhibition of '1000 Peace Women Across the Globe'), or '[The history of world peace in 100 objects: Visualizing peace in a peace museum](#)'. There is no mention of the visualisation of peace through banners or murals, or to such organisations as 'Visual Artists Against Nuclear Arms' (VAANA). Formed in 1984 in New Zealand to raise public awareness and to support fellow peace groups through art, VAANA produced graphics for many peace organisations and peace posters etc. that were distributed worldwide. For a fascinating history of the organisation by its founder, Margaret Lawlor-Bartlett, [go here](#); also see [this link](#). Considering what might be expected from a representative overview of approaches to visualising peace, the articles in the special, 150-page issue of *Peace & Change* appear rather peripheral.



Iconic VAANA Peace Mural in Auckland recently restored

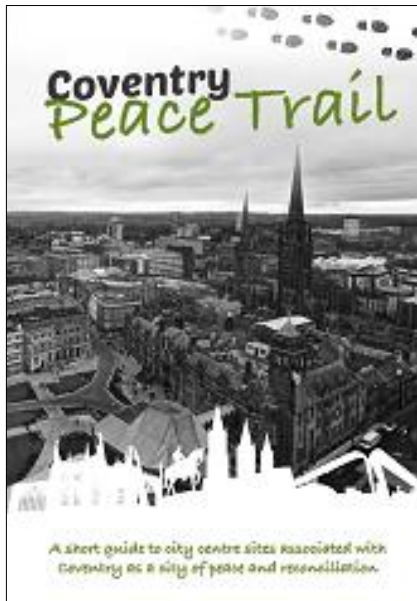
Coventry City (UK) Peace Trail

The *Coventry Peace Trail* is a 20-page illustrated guide to city centre sites associated with Coventry as a city of peace and reconciliation. The trail starts in the ruins of St. Michael's Cathedral which was destroyed from the air on 14th November 1940 – the only cathedral church in the country to be lost in this way. The ruins stand as a powerful symbol of the impact of war and also serve as a place of pilgrimage. A commemorative plaque unveiled on that day in 1990, marking the 50th anniversary of the Coventry Blitz, bears the words, 'Nation shall not lift up sword against nation ... neither shall they learn war any more' (Old Testament, Micah 4:3). Five years later, to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, the Cathedral received a copy of Josefina de Vasconcellos's *Reconciliation* sculpture (which can also be seen in Belfast, Berlin, and Hiroshima, with the original in Bradford, UK). There are also memorials to civilians killed in war, including German civilians killed in the Allied bombings, especially in Dresden during 1940-1945. Nearby are two Japanese oak trees planted by Yoko Ono in 2005; in June 1968, together with John Lennon, she had planted two acorns for peace in the Cathedral grounds.



The trail also includes Dresden Place and a plaque marking the square that was unveiled in 1974 by the Mayor of Dresden – testimony to the friendship link 'born out of wartime destruction and now devoted to international understanding and peace'. The two cities have been twinned since 1956. The trail can be downloaded at [this link](#). (An earlier version of the trail was briefly mentioned in INMP Newsletter No. 25, December 2018, p.

24). For more information on Coventry as a city of peace and reconciliation, [go here](#).



Reports on three visits to museums and centres in Cambodia and Thailand

By Kya Kim, Director, Peace Mask Project

1. Cambodian Landmine Museum, Siem Reap, Cambodia

After decades of war in the early 1990's, it was estimated that there were some 8–10 million landmines and other unexploded ordinance (UXO) still scattered throughout rural Cambodia. Through a massive international effort to deactivate these mines, the number is believed to have been halved. Serious injury from landmines has resulted in around 40,000 amputees in the country to date, one of the highest rates in the world, with 11 landmine-related deaths as recent as last year. These deadly weapons of war, that target indiscriminately, have made economic stability excessively difficult for rural families who have lost access to farming land or other means of making a living.

[The Cambodia Landmine Museum](#) near Banteay Srei temple, part of the World Heritage Angkor Wat complex, may not be a typical stop for most tourists, but for many Cambodians Aki Ra (Founder) is lauded as a living legend. Having been a child soldier under the Khmer Rouge, and

later defecting to the Vietnamese army, he estimates that he single-handedly laid thousands of landmines. After war ended, he joined a UN force to unearth the very same UXOs and has dedicated his life to this cause. This being a newer museum opened in 2007, he opened the first landmine museum in 1997, which was ordered closed in 2006.



The museum sign at the entrance of the Cambodia Landmine Museum



A "pagoda" filled with landmines in the museum

Over the years, and with the support of many friends from around the world, the museum has established a children's home for those orphaned or injured by landmines, a school for at-risk youth, and provided opportunities and benefits for museum staff including housing and food. "We're like a family here, I am very lucky," said one young mother working there. The building itself is filled with many of the deactivated landmines Aki Ra has collected over the years,

most of them manufactured in China, Russia, and the United States. In visiting one is made very aware that this is not a story of the distant past, but of ongoing structural violence. A freshly-pinned letter appealing to Americans on a bulletin board reads, “On January 31 (2020), Mr. Trump lifted the ban on US forces using landmines. We at the Landmine Museum are hugely disappointed in the direction the US has taken... Landmines will be removed when we, as brothers and sisters, demand their removal. Everywhere.”



A photograph of Aki Ra in the field, 2000

You can read about US President Donald Trump’s lifting of the ban [here](#). If you are an American citizen, please consider contacting your Representative and/or Senator about this issue. For a list of States Parties and non-signatories to the International Mine Ban Treaty, [click here](#). An article about Aki Ra can also be found in [The Guardian](#).

2. Patani Artspace, Pattani, Southern Thailand

Jehabdulloh Jehsorhoh, a 35-year old Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at the Prince of Songkla University in Pattani, Thailand, is at the helm of a collective that aims to become a contemporary art learning space for underprivileged young artists. The community is based in the heart of an ongoing conflict between a minority Muslim group and the Thai government. Named ‘Patani Artspace,’ it is significant that its spelling uses Jawi, a Malay Islamic script that is native to the Muslim community, rather than the government-mandated spelling “Pattani” in a determined claim to self-identity.



Jehabdulloh Jehsorhoh with some of his artworks

The community houses a gallery, studio spaces and accommodation for ten young artists, and a café for visitors. An international art festival is organized here every August, inviting collaborators from around the world to join them in building a movement for peace through art. Jehsorhoh believes that “art can transform conflict and break down walls by expressing truth”. It is this vision that has garnered support from near and far for their yearly festival.



Jehsorhoh with some of the artists in residence

The current exhibition in the gallery titled “Tortured” includes a series of self-portraits by community members mapping the pain inflicted on them through physical violence, imprisonment, forced confession, and separation from family members. Remarkably, one notices that a significant number of the portraits depict smiles. When asked about this a staff member responded, “I think the smile shows that despite the pain we still have hope, and that hope is what gives us dignity.”



One of the self-portraits by community members in the "Tortured" exhibit

The community welcomes guests to visit when in Thailand. You can see a video about Patani Artspace and their annual festival [here](#), and visit their [Facebook page](#) (in Thai). For Jehabdulloh Jehsorhoh's personal website of artworks, [go here](#).

3. Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

[Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center](#), named after a young woman's tragic love story during the reign of the Khmer Rouge, was founded by Cambodian filmmaker Rithy Pahn in 2006. The Center provides free public access to an extensive digital database of film, television, photography and sound archives of Cambodia from around the world. In a race against time to save what footage survived systematic destruction during conflict, the Center has tirelessly collected over 700 hours of footage, going as far back as the first movies of the Lumière brothers in the nineteenth century, providing Cambodians a window into their precious heritage.



A painting of Bophana on display in the stairwell

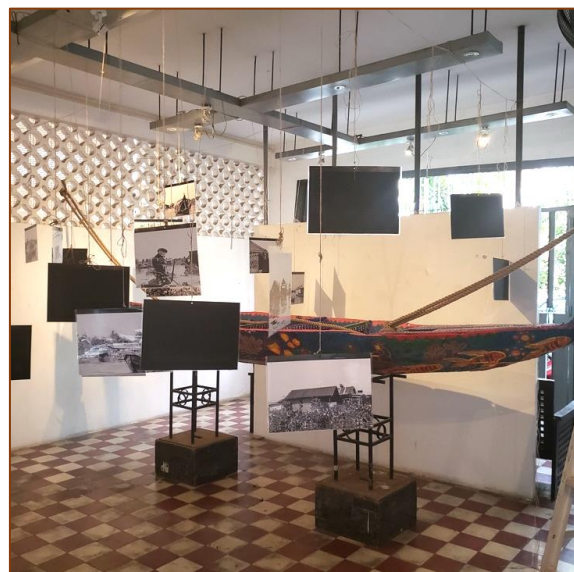
Not only does Bophana Center curate this valuable archive, they also engage with the community through educational workshops, film-screenings, and training. According to Pahn, "Cambodia is a young country, and we must give

prospects to the youth. The past tells us what may happen tomorrow; and images are here to make us think and feed us; it is a great strength to move forward. Education helps us analyze the images and master the techniques; creation enables us to speak up but also express what we see and how we feel."



Framed posters of Rithy Pahn's films

One of their ongoing projects provides full scholarships for indigenous Cambodians, particularly women, and other groups facing discrimination, for a 24-month filmmaking and multimedia training. A wonderful exhibition in collaboration with Cambodian NGO [Women Peace Makers](#) currently showcases photographs taken by the Vietnamese boat people (a nomadic community living on the waters of the Tonle Sap lake), displayed alongside a 30 year-old wooden boat adorned with colorfully painted aquatic symbols, in Bophana Center's lobby in Phnom Penh.



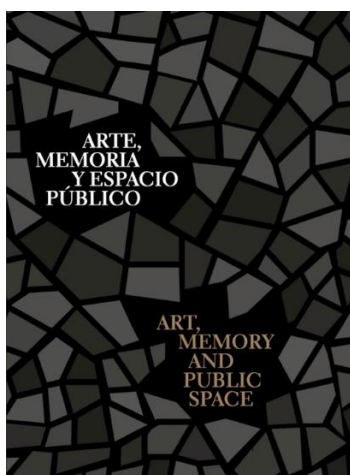
Exhibition of photographs by Vietnamese boat people

You can read an article about Bophana Center's training program [here](#). An interview with

filmmaker and founder, Rithy Pahn, can be read [here](#). A smartphone app for education on Khmer Rouge history, created by Bophana Center in partnership with the European Union and the Rei Foundation, is available from [this link](#).

New Publications

(1) The Gernika Peace Museum has published a book entitled *Art, memory and public space* that brings together the papers that were delivered by notable experts during a series of activities carried out throughout 2018 within the framework of the travelling seminar of the same title. The seminar was held in four cities: Gernika, Granollers, Barcelona and Sartaguda. The illustrated 239-page volume, which contains contributions and translations in five languages, has been edited by the museum's director, Iratxe Momoitio Astorkia. The authors and artists address the question, 'How could we portray what has disappeared ... How to explain horror, a trauma whose description only in words will never do it justice? How to fill the ethical vacuum in an anomic society that does not remember the value of the struggle for freedom carried out by previous generations?'



Cover of book

(2) The leading French peace writer and activist, Jean-Paul Vienne, recently contributed an original and interesting article

to the French peace monthly, *Planète Paix* (No. 649/650, February/March 2020, pp. 28-29). Titled, 'Making good use of military museums', he presents a concise typology of military museums following visits to a good number of them in several countries in Europe. He recalls the motto of the Museum of Military History in Vienna, 'Wars belong in the museum' and asks to what extent the many military museums can be seen as complementing the few peace museums. He singles out the main museum of the German army in Dresden, the Bundeswehr Museum of Military History, as the most pacifist-minded.

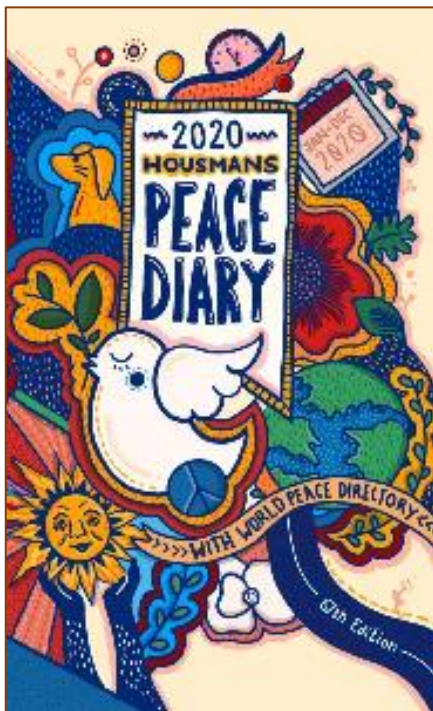


This is perhaps not surprising in a city which was almost completely destroyed in the controversial Allied bombing raids towards the end of World War 2 in Europe in February 1945. The author believes that, when confronted with the countless instruments of war and destruction which humans have developed to annihilate each other, visitors who do not succumb to desperation can become even more resolute in their opposition to war. The author, who is a member of the editorial board of *Planète Paix*, mentions INMP in an article on 'peace through museums' that he contributed to an earlier issue ('La paix par les musées', No. 619, February 2017, p. 23). The magazine can be downloaded [here](#).



Bundeswehr Museum of Military History, Dresden
(Photo credit: Nick Hufton)

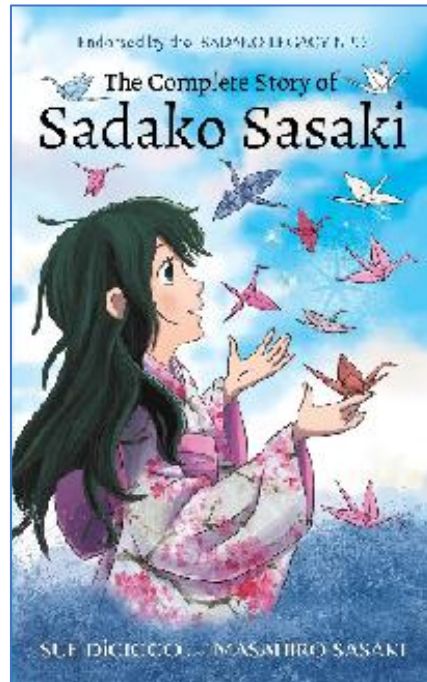
(3) A previous issue of this newsletter has drawn attention to the annual *Housmans Peace Diary* (with World Peace Directory; see No. 26, March 2019, pp. 15-16). The special essay in the 2020 edition is about 'Peace Days and anniversaries – their origins and uses'. It provides details of some 25 anniversaries including international days for conscientious objectors, for children as victims of war, for the total abolition of nuclear weapons, for the elimination of violence against women, for the elimination of racial discrimination, etc. Among anniversary days are those dedicated to world peace, Martin Luther King, Jr., the United Nations, human rights, prisoners for peace, etc. Museums for peace are well placed to observe such anniversaries by organising public events, including talks, films, exhibitions.



(4) *The Complete Story of Sadako Sasaki* by Masahiro Sasaki and Sue DiCicco tells her full story in English for the first time. Sadako was two, and her brother Masahiro four, when the atomic bomb destroyed Hiroshima.

They survived but Sadako died ten years later of leukaemia, caused by exposure to the bomb. The book contains photographs of

Sadako and her family never before seen by the public. In 2009 her brother established a non-profit organisation, The Sadako Legacy. Sue DiCicco, a prolific author and illustrator of books for children, founded the Peace Crane Project in 2012. For more information, [go here](#).



This newsletter is edited by Peter van den Dungen, Kazuyo Yamane, Ikuro Anzai, and Kya Kim.

Readers are encouraged to subscribe to our regular quarterly newsletter by sending your email to:

inmpoffice@gmail.com

Deadline for submission of articles for No. 31 to be published in June 2020 is the 15th of May.