



If you don' t believe in miracles, you' re not a realist

Ingrid Rollema

Dear mister Akio Komatsu and dear team of the Human Nature Science Institute, Thank you for inviting me to participate in your Symposium 'The Sunrise from Izumo' hosted by Komatsu Electric Industry Company here in Matsue.

Dear audience, thank you for lending me an ear. I hope I will not disappoint you.

This is the first time I visit your beautiful country. Your impressive country really inspires me. The landscape, the people' s attitude, your rich and stirring culture, Your invitation forced me to quickly learn as much as possible about you! Your

your history. Everything!

presence here is already a gift to me. I recall what I learned in school about the historical relationship between Japan and the Netherlands. And immediately the name Decima comes to mind. Decima in the harbor of Nagasaki. This small island that served as a trading post between Japan and Holland from 1641 till 1859. We learned in school that the Dutch were the only contact between Japan and the Western World at the time. Six ships set sail to Japan in 1641. Only one ship with 24 crew members actually reached its shores. The name of the ship was 'De Liefde', which means Love. This name at least was a good start!

The Eternal River is the philosophic outline of this symposium. The life of Sutoh Yahee is a beautiful metaphor. The man who dedicated his whole life to change the course of the river, to safeguard his village and give his people a future. Changing the course of a river is something the Dutch understand very, very well. We have been doing that for centuries. For your information: most of the Dutch are living below sea level.



I would like to show you some images of the world I live in and the soil I grew up on. The water, the mud, the sea and the rivers.

My name is Ingrid Rollema. I am a visual artist from The Netherlands.

The country of the Netherlands is situated in a delta and is absolutely flat. Two large rivers provide a constant supply of silt. This material, the Dutch river clay, is the material of my dreams.

I make my sculptures with the clay that is used to grow our food on, in the same way the Italians hack their sculptures from the white marble that is hidden in their mountains.

Of all the materials in the world, clay has the richest cultural history. Clay has been used to visualize cultures from prehistoric times up till now; from cave paintings to the newest car engines. It is my dream to connect this oldest artistic material to the digital world. The Dutch river clay flows from the middle of Europe to the Delta that I live in. Today this clay flows into your country in the guise of an artwork. Thank you for that. The Eternal River flows

everywhere. In relation to your and my culture I had a remarkable thought: If I look to the stars I can see stars flickering, light years away from us, stars that often don' t even exist anymore. But they still shine as parts of our reality. If I look to the ground under my feet my past is hidden there. It is real, I can touch it, but I can' t even one millimeter of it. The ground under my feet doesn' t show to my eyes. It hides everything.



foto van Nederlandse delta?

In this very small country I own a studio in an old factory where they used to make organs for religious ceremonies at home. This happened to be the showroom. This is the place where everything starts. This is the essential place where my sculptures and drawings originate. A place where dreams are born, because.... well, whoever doesn't believe in dreams is not a realist!

foto atelier

Mr. Komatsu, I have read your book and studied the things your Human Nature Science Institute endeavors in the field of International Peace. When you speak about peace, you see it as an extension of harmony. WA.

Harmony is a concept that is probably experienced differently and is rooted deeper in Asia than it is in the western world. The history of Europe, like yours, consists of endless battles and bloodshed reaching a climax in two world wars. These are so terrible that after World War II poets stop writing their verses and sculptors stop their search for beauty. The artistic world was crippled and silenced.

In the course of the last century the arts have been rapidly changing. While the artists were used to working for the church, royal families and in general those who were in power, nowadays we see that they are choosing their own goals and try to articulate what needs to be said. We teach young art students skills to do research. We encourage them to search for a meaningful life and meaningful artworks. Artists are educated to think independently and to stand up for their ideas.

Dear audience, let it be clear we are all looking for and working on a sustainable future. It means that we have to educate ourselves and our youngsters. For this symposium 'The Sunrise of Izumo' I will try to present my thoughts about a sustainable future that will also be a peaceful future and the important role of the arts in society. What do I teach my students?

First of all I ask: "In what kind of world do you want to live?" Forget about absolute security! Keep searching for a sense of liberation. Get your fears under control! If there is anything in the world that can help us achieve these aims, it is ART! In the arts important processes are taking place. We think, we imagine. We are able to try out new shapes and bring about small changes in the order of things. We can produce a sign, a sign that we are able to change. We can show our willingness and responsibility by actually doing so. Art is the place where we can resist mediocrity, populism and unbridled capitalism. My most important question to the students is: "What image of the world do you want to portray as an artist? What values would you like to defend? What image of mankind will emerge? What possibilities do you see in the impossibility of your situation?"

Reality offers forces, opportunities and ideas that would never have occurred to you. Where borders are fading away, new horizons will appear. What I want to communicate with you is that in art we analyze, we try to find new points of views and we generate new possibilities. It means working for the future! I will try to make myself clear by showing.

For me personal art is solidified, materialist thought. Your question to me was to make visible what art can contribute to your attempt to bring more sustainable peace in this regent. My answer is the answer of an outsider. I try to do this by experience over the last 20 years. I do that in two different ways 1. By founding "The Theatre of Wrong Decisions" and 2. By working for almost 20 years in a refugee camp in Gaza with the war traumatized children via the arts.

My colleague Willem Vugteveen and I have founded in Gaza Palestine a Foundation called Holland Office for Personal

Encouragement. HOPE We managed to establish an open studio. In this studio 350 children get support on a daily basis by offering lessons in the fields of art and culture. The HOPE Foundation wants to encourage traumatized children [including children with disabilities] to build a meaningful life for themselves. The observation of a child may give cause to embark on a therapy process. Sadly war is a recurring phenomenon and we until now we do not have a world without traumatized children. We attempt to reduce the negative effects of war and contribute to a process that enables these children to live meaningful lives. We attempt to reach our goals by offering lessons in art in our 'Open Studio'. The arts activate the imagination, sharpen the mind and heal the heart: creating conditions that lead to increased self-respect and self-confidence. This in turn can lead to a lessening of fear and an increased sense of safety. Developing self-confidence and self-respect may also lead to making positive life choices. The HOPE Foundation also interfaces with society and encourages participation of the children's parents. For the last 7 years HOPE works together with the Dutch Red Cross. The Dutch Red Cross is responsible for the finances. Powerpoint die we hebben?

Six years ago I couldn't stay at the sideline anymore and started to react at the cruelties I had seen for more than a decade. The WikiLeaks film of the killings from a helicopter in Bagdad and the enormous bombardments on Gaza with 1430 casualties made me react.

At first I made an artwork entitled 'The return of the Ghosts'. This installation included 1417 figures made of clay from Palestinian soil representing the casualties of the bombardments in 2008. 'The Return of the Ghosts' became a wonderful project. Activists from South Africa, Africa, Middle East and Europe came together to exchange knowledge and information. We managed to bring them to our Parliament to share their stories and their political views. Then I've asked my colleague, Dutch designer Guus Boudestein, to develop a book that would be an artwork in itself. He succeeded in his effort. Each book is symbolizing a victim of the bombardments. Each book has the name of a victim. So every book is unique. The whole edition shows 1417 Palestinian and 13 Israeli names. We've installed this huge installation in the Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels, Belgium. In 5 day's time we received 23.000 visitors. The five of us, each integral part of the installation, had discussions with the visitors in 5 languages. I will show you the film.

The second attempt to achieve something in relation to peace in the field of the arts is: "The Theatre of Wrong Decisions". In this way, we want to comment on the 'present' by using views from the past. All our statements are related to Shakespeare. Shakespeare wrote his plays 400 years ago. Shakespeare, however, in his turn found his inspiration in stories that go back 2000 years. For example, our film about Syria contains a quote from Shakespeare's Macbeth: "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand". It is said that when Macbeth is about to enter into senseless, irrational violence this will ultimately result in cruel, blood-drenched madness. A philosopher and dramatist with the Dutch National Theatre supplied us with the right quotes and accompanying plays by Shakespeare. A second film that we are working on is about the island of Lampedusa. It features a head of clay that is smashed to pieces by the pounding of the waves. We use this quote from 'The Tempest': "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep...." (the Tempest, act IV, sc. 1).

"The Theatre of Wrong Decisions"

The South African artist William Kentridge is active in the same field. As historical point of departure for his artwork "Black Box", Kentridge used German colonialism in Africa, in particular the massacre of the Herero tribe in Southwest Africa (present day Namibia), in 1904, which is marked by the United Nations as the first genocide of the twentieth century. This historical fact touched Kentridge's South-African identity and presented him with questions about circumstance, complicity, coping process, sorrow and reconciliation. Kentridge calls "Black Box" a 'Trauerarbeit', a work of sorrow, referring to Freud's notion that a grieving, bereaved relative can work on coping with his loss by actively reliving the trauma.



An artist who is admired by us because of his courage is the Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei. I believe Ai Wei Wei is as well known in Japan as in the Netherlands.

Dear audience I mentioned already the second World war and the way we dealt in Europe with Life after the second WW. How can we work towards a situation without revenge. I think it was very important that Germany offers endless apologies. A program by the name of Wiedergutmachung (reparation) was set up. In places where Germany caused a lot of damage, German civilians volunteer to repair it. This is unrelated to all the reparation payments that are made by the German Government. Even today there are programs that mainly focus on acquainting young people with the mechanisms of war, peace and coexistence. I like to tell you my personal story.



When I was six years old I had to start school. My father asked me to take an atlas from the bookshelves. I was sitting on his lap and he showed me the map of Europe. "Look, Ingkie, this little country that we live in is called The Netherlands. And this big country here is Germany. Soon you will be going to school and other people will start interfering with your upbringing." Although the war had been over for fourteen years it was still a big issue. "When you're in class and the teacher or one of the children is talking about 'krauts' [a derogatory term for Germans], you will stand up, walk out of the classroom and come straight home. We need to do everything in our power to become friends." This man, who had survived three camps during the war, did not want his children to start their lives with feelings of revenge. Looking back I understand that this attitude made my father a hero. He wanted us to start our lives with an open mind and in the greatest freedom possible. He understood that we are all interdependent. We had arrived in a new age.

Mr. Komatsu, I think that this story of a man and a child is also your story. In your own words: "We have reached the point of no return, we are now all dependent on each other through the international labor division in the basic industries of food, clothing and housing." To reach your goal you employ a variety of methods. The fact that you also involve the arts moves me greatly. I will try to explain why. If art is solidified thought, what could be the function of a sculpture? I think a sculpture is a stationary moment in time, the outcome of a

row of successive thoughts and associations. If the essence of thought is clear and universal, the artwork can, from out of the blue, provide an insight that is more comprehensive and deeper than that provided by a pile of books. At first sight a work of art affects the heart and only later it reaches the head. If a work of art moves the spectator, it is also able to mobilize that person. The spectator may be prompted into action. And this is exactly what you wish to achieve with your Institute. You wish for mankind to work on peace and imagine and reflect on their desired future. You ask for an active attitude. It is your dream to build a stage of empathy for man's evolution for the first time in history in the Japanese archipelago and the Korean Peninsula, the place where the three nuclear superpowers meet. You believe this can be done by learning from American smart power, Chinese hexie (harmony), Korean hwajaeng (harmony) and Japanese wajoo (harmony).

You have a dream about Okinawa to become an Island of Perpetual World Peace with a center that consists of three main institutions. The International Peace Center" plan was born from our studies of geopolitical meanings in the human history of Okinawa which is not yet free from various kinds of antagonism. The center will be a "facility of promises" to open the door to the future of humankind and help Okinawa become an "Island of Perpetual World Peace." The Center consists of the following three main institutions.

(1) "The World War and Peace Picture & Video Center" will play a role of a kind of "central museum" of war and peace museums in the world by inter-connecting them on the internet by using ICT.

(2) "The Memorial Tower" will collect the data of all the war victims in modern wars and record them permanently in the form of electronic data to which visitors have free access from any place of the world.

(3) "The Palace of Wa (peace/harmony)" will make the best use of the forefront of science and technology and sponsor many activities to bring forth "the culture of Wa" such as peace conferences, "Wisdom Olympics," throwing light on people who have contributed to peace, etc.

On behalf of the Human, Nature and Science Institute you propose to make the Korean Peninsula and

Japan a nonnuclear zone with the strong support of the three big nuclear powers and designate the area as a birthplace of "Wa culture." 和 is also the theme of the 23rd World Scout Jamboree in Japan, in summer 2015. Also, the step-by-step nuclear disarmament of all the nations with nuclear weapons, we believe, should start simultaneously.

Simultaneously, that's the word.

In the Netherlands my colleague and friend Guus Boudenstein is also working in the same field. He is a member of a design studio called Design Thinking and is also developing plans for museums in relation to disarmament.

Plan Guus

And now I think it is time to talk about the reason why I am standing here!

Last year the Carnegie Foundation commissioned me to make a sculpture representing Bertha von Suttner (1843-1914) on the occasion of the centenary anniversary of the Peace Palace in The Hague. I would like to take you on a journey that has been life-changing for me. In order to create a good sculpture, a sculptress has to immerse herself in the subject matter. To this end, Marianne Kleijwegt, the publisher of a book about Bertha von Suttner, and I decided to go on a trip to visit important places in Bertha's life.

Foto Bertha



In her day, Bertha von Suttner is the most famous woman in the world. She is a writer, peace activist, the first female laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize and spiritual mother of the Peace Palace that was financed by Andrew Carnegie. In her book *Die Waffen nieder!* (Lay down your arms!, 1889) war is described from the point of view of the people staying at home for the very first time in history. She challenges the prevailing view of her contemporaries that war is honorable and masculine. This results in a peace movement of unprecedented proportions. *Die Waffen nieder!* opens with the Battle of Solferino. (1859)



The day after this battle, Henry Dunant witnesses the enormous massacre that had taken place and this prompts him to found the Red Cross. Goya had printed already the horror of war in his studio in Spain.



Many individuals started to act different! The fact that over a period of about thirty years different people in different places all over Europe developed similar visions, offers food for thought. My question to you is: "Could there have been some kind of widespread, collective mindset?"

Before we set off on our travels, Minister of State Peter Kooijmans pays a visit to my studio. Kooijmans was Dutch Minister of Foreign affairs and served as a judge for the International Court of Justice in the Peace Palace for eight years. He and I conclude that the only significant question that has to be answered in order to create a relevant sculpture is: Who would this woman be today? Would she be a member of Greenpeace? No. Would she be a member of Amnesty International? Yes. Would she

be accepted? No. Even to this day her appeal for total disarmament remains too revolutionary. Kooijmans visit gives me the inspiration I am looking for. This is the chance of a lifetime. I know I will not be portraying a woman from the 19th century, but a

woman living in the here and now; clever, proud, passionate, intelligent, tenacious, creative, but also difficult. A woman who uses everything to fight her battle. Everything. A sculpture to inspire.

In February 2013 we drove to the German city of Gotha where Bertha von Suttner's ashes are kept at the Columbarium. We leave a bouquet of Dutch flowers. After that we drive to Prague where she was born in one of the largest city palaces of Europe. Her life unfolds like a novel. She stems from the aristocratic military family Kinsky von Wchinitz und Tettau. Her father dies before she is born. Her mother has a gambling addiction and gambles away Bertha's inheritance. When, at a marriageable age, Bertha rejects the proposals of three princes she decides to become self-supporting; a great disgrace for a woman of her social class. It will be her first act of resistance.

She gets a position in the house of Baron Von Suttner. To the dismay of their families, Bertha and Von Suttner's son, who is seven years her junior, fall in love. When the situation becomes unbearable, Bertha leaves for Paris to work for Alfred Nobel. (the founder of the Nobel Prizes) When he meets the stunningly beautiful Bertha at the station, he falls madly in love with her. He forgets his manners and utters the memorable words: "Madam, is your heart still free?" Their working relationship is short-lived. Bertha travels back to Vienna and marries Arthur von Suttner in secret. Alfred Nobel proves to be a man of honor. Bertha and he remain lifelong friends and whenever necessary he supports her financially. The couple's relatives are furious and banish them. They take up residence in the Caucasus, where they witness the terrible Russo-Turkish war. With her own eyes Bertha sees the humiliation and disruption of war. In reaction to this she writes *Die Waffen Nieder!* It is her second act of resistance.

When finally *Die Waffen Nieder!* is published in Austria and Germany, the book becomes all the rage. It is translated into 16 languages. Peace movements all over Europe reach out to each other. The first major peace movement in world history is a fact. Darwin's theory of evolution teaches Bertha that human beings are capable of change. She studies the psychological methods that governments use to manipulate their citizens and incite them to fight in their wars. Her analyses are razor-sharp, confrontational and still ring true today.

Bertha asks Alfred Nobel many times to support the peace movement, but he refuses every time. I think I understand this. As the inventor of dynamite, Nobel profits from warfare. However, Bertha is unaware of the fact that, before he dies in San Remo on 10th December 1896, Nobel records the conditions for the Nobel Peace Prize in his last will and testament.

At the other side of the ocean a man named Carnegie took his responsibility: "Because Alfred Nobel passed away I am now the richest man on earth", he said, "and I feel the responsibility to support those initiatives that leads to a better world". Bertha von Suttner heard that sentence and took the boat to America where she gets in contact with Carnegie. Andrew Carnegie's granddaughter, Linda Thorell Hill, told me at the unveiling of the statue that her grandfather and Bertha were great friends. It was Bertha who persuaded Carnegie to house the Permanent Court of Arbitration in a charismatic, alluring building. "That building will represent a new age. From now on differences between states will be resolved by a judicial power that stands above these parties. Warfare is desperately old-fashioned and there is no need for it anymore." Today we would say: peace is HOT. Bertha invented the Peace Palace. Carnegie made it possible.

The road I traveled making this statue was difficult and delicate. First I wanted to put Bertha on a base of pressed paper made from her own books. The judging-committee rejected my concept. Then they wanted me to make the statue of Bertha as an older lady. I didn't like this option at all. In her late thirties and early forties Bertha was at the height of her creative powers. She wrote her book and she managed to bring up other points of view. We have to see her in her creative moments, I argued. That will inspire our youth! We did not manage in settling this point. So we had a severe problem. I could not sleep. If I should do what the commissioner wanted I would miss a meaningful point of the statue. I decided to take the risk to do what I thought was right. They could reject it which would have caused a scandal and of course they would end up by not paying me. On the other hand making a statue that has no meaning was even worse. So at the unveiling ceremony I stood right beside the director of the Peace Palace because I knew that he might explode! When he saw the sculpture he looked at me. He was flabbergasted and bent over to me. "I am so happy you didn't listen to us," he said.

Just a day before the unveiling of the statue I was sitting in the City Hall waiting for my neighbor because we forgot a little piece of a rope. While I was sitting there, many, many people were arriving and departing. All of a sudden I saw a young Japanese girl who was watching the world very attentively. This affected me because you so rarely see people looking around them as intensely as she did. So I stood up, went to her and asked her if she would be interested in the surroundings and if she liked I could tell her something. She nodded her head and said she was highly interested. Then very soon 6 other Japanese turned up. "Well you are all from Japan?", I

said. "I have made a statue and tomorrow it will be unveiled. We wrapped it up but for you I will uncover it and you can see the Japanese writing." At the same time an older man had turned up. I was wearing my working clothes and wooden shoes with dots of paint and the old man was walking on a kind of slippers. He looked very, very casual. We talked and laughed for a little while and when my neighbor returned we finished the job for the unveiling. "If you have time please come tomorrow and attend the official unveiling." , I said. So the next day at the unveiling ceremony I saw all the Japanese people. We were all dressed much more smartly. I liked it so much that they had found time to come that I asked them to come over to my house for a modest dinner. A friend of mine did the cooking. My apartment is directly opposite the City Hall and as we were standing on the balcony, it seemed to me that the Peace Palace employees were actually acquainted with the Japanese visitors.

I was just becoming aware of that fact when one of the board members asked me: "Hey, Ingrid how do you know Mr. Komatsu?" "Mr. Komatsu?" I answered, "I don't know Mr. Komatsu." . "But he is standing right over there!" How could I have known? I found them on the street!

So now you know our story.

Dear audience I mentioned it already the word Simultaneously,

There is a Sculpture to inspire in The Hague and a Sculpture to inspire in Matsue.

In The Hague young people are inspired to think about war and peace. The lessons are given with the statue of BvS in their midst. Because The Hague is city of Peace and justice there are given lessons to all youngsters duty-bound about questions about peace and war. They are made aware of the fact that an individual is almost always able to stand up and make a difference. Bertha von Suttner lived in an age in which a collective mindset existed. The question we should ask ourselves now is: Do we also live in an age with a widespread collective mindset? And if so, what do you intend do with it?

Shakespeare said that artists are the true witnesses of their age. But the arts are capable of more than just bearing witness to their age. The arts are able to transform. This entails that unutterable feelings, varying from deep longings to inconceivable hardships, can be discussed without directly naming them. It is this mechanism that enables the unimaginable to become imaginable. On this subject Albert Einstein remarked: "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand" . Literature and the visual arts boost imagination. The arts mobilize our conscience. By placing oneself in someone else' s shoes the other will become more familiar and destruction will no longer be an option. Give the enemy a face.

What I have been saying in the last 40 minutes can be summarized in the next couple of sentences. The world is far more complex than we can imagine and even if I do not understand the question, I still know that the answer is: EDUCATION!

Let's change the course of the river for the future of mankind. That means: Disarmament.

We can only achieve this if people in different places all over the world are working on it simultaneously.

The arts are the transmitters, because thought, image, word and sound sharpen our Imagination and this triggers us to come into action.

This train of thought reminded me of the conversation in my studio with judge Kooijmans. He really liked to think with me. "You are privileged to react to the developments in the world within the field of the arts. You can react directly and within the context of a long tradition. The International Court of Justice in The Hague is so slow and has to deal with so many restrictions that it has to be careful not to practice law to a world that has long ceased to exist.

Mr. Komatsu, you not only have a vision about a beautiful future for the world, but also about the steps necessary to achieve it. I have deep respect for you and your team I can only say that all important people started by following their dreams. And this closes the circle. Whoever doesn' t believe in dreams is not a realist

Warmest regards and ... peace is cool.

Ingrid Rollema