



“The Ship of Tolerance” Rises in Miami

November 29, 2011

by Pat Rogers

DISPATCH - November 29, 2011 (7:08 p.m.)

North Fork, NY and Miami, FL

Waving a flag to draw attention is a time-tested tradition. Hoisting a sail to encourage tolerance and embrace differences may be on the way to becoming one. The fifth incarnation of “The Ship of Tolerance” takes to the waterways of Miami this week in conjunction with the Miami art fairs. Captaining the project are artists Ilya and Emilia Kabakov.

The Russian-born artists now make their home on the North Fork of Long Island. With some help from Dave Kapell of Greenport and a lot of cooperation from Miami Children’s Museum and area organizations, “The Ship of Tolerance” is making its debut in America.



“Ship of Tolerance” in Venice. Shown is artist Ilya Kabakov. Courtesy Kapell Gallery.

On Nov 30, a sail featuring artwork made by Miami children will be hoisted on a boat made by student carpenters from England and constructed in Miami, Florida.

The ship is a replicate of the original “The Ship of Tolerance” built in 2005 in Egypt, according to Wolfgang Roth and Partners Fine Art, a project sponsor. The ship is 60 meters by 20 meters, according to their website.

The ship remains on view through Dec 4 to coincide with Art Basel Miami Beach. The art fair is being held from Dec 1 to 4.

“The Ship of Tolerance” was conceived by the Kabakovs as a way to shake loose the notion that differences are something to fear.

“It is a conceptual piece that is meant to reflect how divergent cultures interpret tolerance and how these interpretations overlap,” according to www.shipoftolerance.org.

So far, tolerance-building projects have been held in Siwa, Egypt; Venice, Italy; St. Moritz, Switzerland; and Sharjah, UAE, according the project website. “The Ship of Tolerance” in Miami, Florida is the first time the project is being conducted in America. Another ship project is planned for the Bronx this spring (2012).



“Ship of Tolerance” in Sharja, UAE. Courtesy Kapell Gallery.



“Ship of Tolerance” in Siwa, Egypt. Courtesy Kapell Gallery.

“The Ship of Tolerance” is often staged in communities where differences are causing strife, explained Kapell. The process engages children in the area and includes discussing diversity, brainstorming for solutions to ease tensions and making art.

Other times, the location selected for the project was to give children a taste of something new. This can mean exposure to art techniques not typical for the area or exploring the concept of diversity in a homogenous society, according to www.shipoftolerance.org.

For artist couple Ilyva and Emilia Kabakov, big and conceptual matches their fine art style. Ilya Kabakov belonged to a group of Russian conceptual artists in the 1980s working “outside of the official Soviet art system,” according to his website. Ilyva and Emilia began making art together in 1988. The pair have collaborated ever since and married in 1992. Both were born in Russia and separately relocated, eventually settling in the United States.

Kapell, a former Greenport Village mayor, met the Kabakovs through mutual friends. After hearing about the project, he got involved by working with political decision-makers in the cities of Miami and Miami Beach to help the ship rise from idea into actuality, he said.

In Miami, the ship building began in July. Around 300 students participated in the project, said Kapell. The sail will feature around 150 artworks made on cloth. The rest of the art will be exhibited around the city. After Art Basel Miami Beach closes, “The Ship of Tolerance” will be exhibited at the Miami Children’s Museum through January 2012.

Here’s a look at the process:



“The Ship of Tolerance” under construction in Miami. All images courtesy Kapell Gallery.



“The Ship of Tolerance” under construction in Miami.



“The Ship of Tolerance” under construction in

Miami.

Ultimately, “The Ship of Tolerance” may be planting seeds throughout the world to give peace a chance to grow and ultimately bloom through art.

BASIC FACTS: “The Ship of Tolerance” by Ilya and Emilia Kabakov will be on view from Nov 30 to Dec 4 next to Miami Children’s Museum on Watson Island at 980 MacArthur Causeway, Miami, FL. “The Ship of Tolerance” is an art-based student project conceived and led by artists Ilya and Emilia Kabakov. The Miami ship is presented and supported by Miami Children’s Museum and area organizations. See: www.shipoftolerance.org

Ilya and Emilia Kabakov have exhibited their fine art internationally. Their work has been shown in the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC, the 1997 Whitney Biennial and others. The pair represented Russia in the 45th Venice Biennale in 1993. A retrospective of their work is traveling this year and next with stops expected in Scotland, Norway and Germany. www.ilya-emilia-kabakov.com/

For information on the Kapell Gallery in Greenport or about Miami’s “The Ship of Tolerance,” email Dave Kapell at KapellGallery@gmail.com

© 2011 Pat Rogers and Hamptons Art Hub. All rights reserved.