

Report on Art Exhibition at Kolding Library

(January 25-February 22 with the Official Opening on February 1)

Introduction and Description:

It was an art exhibition to bring awareness to town about United Nations Inter -Faith Harmony Week. Our office knows that some of our friends in Copenhagen have observed this event but because we thought, it would entail many resources in celebrating it in our town; we did not really manage to do it earlier.

It was only when the church committee and the committee for Cross Cultural Ministry in Kolding Deanery gave a push to observe WIHW in 2019 in our calendar, when we took the bold step to see the home page of World InterFaith Harmony Week and got more inspirational information on this worldwide observance. Hence, the serious effort to join began.

We laid out activities from January 20 to March 7 like Brunch Fellowship, Sprogcafe or Learning Danish Language, Women Encounter Women and Lecture Evening. These are events which we have been doing/running on weekly and monthly basis all the year through, but which on this particular time from January to March 2019, we decided to focus on the vision and goals enshrined in the inception of UN World InterFaith Harmony Week.

Content and Process:

The Art Exhibition at Kolding Library was a special extra initiative. It was an effort to bring awareness to the community of Kolding and to the surrounding towns about the existence of United Nations' World Interfaith Harmony Week through art, and to let the people of different religions who visit the exhibition get the chance to reflect on, what religions have in common.

It was easy to call artists who would like to share 2 or 3 of their paintings that could demonstrate symbols in religions or values or virtues which World InterFaith Harmony Week stand for like love, compassion, hospitality, tolerance, understanding, peace and harmony.

With the given little time we had, we thought it was enough to invite 10 artists but 14 came, representing four countries: Philippines, India, Denmark and Iran of different religious or church affiliations. Artists came with their paintings. They helped in hanging up their paintings. We are thankful for the great support of the personnel of Kolding Library, for allowing us to use 15 boards, which artists could use in hanging up the paintings, and for making the information about the event at library's own

website. Special mention goes to Anni Schumacher, who followed us through by supplying our needs from boards to hooks and table for artists' leaflets and for the use of the library kitchen where we could make coffee, tea and wash fruits and arrange biscuits and cakes to serve people who came to the opening or launching of the Art Exhibition.

Exhibition of paintings at Kolding Library started on January 25, but we arranged for the Official Opening of the Art Exhibition to the public on February 1, to coincide with the start of World Inter Faith Harmony Week worldwide. The mayor in town, Jørn Pedersen, accepted our invitation to open the Art Exhibition. It was with great joy that he came with very much prepared speech, giving information on World InterFaith Harmony Week and his great support for the global observance. Elizabeth gave also a speech in Danish, giving the historical background of the event, related to Jordan and the UN Resolution, and introducing other events we have to mark the celebration of WIHW. The official opening started with a song in Danish.

A journalist and a photographer of a regional newspaper, JydskeVestkysten, came to interview some of our artists and a two-page article on the event, relating to the World InterFaith Harmony Week, was available to the public on the newspaper columns on February 2.

Content of the Exhibition

The exhibition had a first display board as introduction to the Art Exhibition. We used materials from Cross- Cultural Center in Copenhagen about words of Welcome in different languages and Calendar 2019 of different feasts and celebrations in religions. We also displayed our list of our activities, specially designed to mark the WIHW. There were also citations or verses from some Holy Scriptures of religions, which affirm the call to Love God and to Love our Neighbor; that we have something in common to be able to envision and work for peace and harmony in spite of differences of faiths and religions.

Exhibition had also a display of citations from Martin Luther King, Gautama Buddha and great Danish musical artist, Kim Larsen, and poems from India, Canada and Denmark. Some of these texts were placed side by side with some paintings. 35 paintings on oil and acryl were exhibited. Kolding Library also supplemented our exhibition by placing an array of books on religions and faiths which guests had the chance to scheme through during their visits.

It was a successful attempt to make known to the community about the United Nations' World Inter Faith Harmony Week; and what we can do together. Texts and citations supplemented the message of exhibited paintings.

The impact of the event: It was an eye- opener for the community, giving place for religions in the common vision for peace and harmony. Art was involved in the celebration, a powerful instrument for information and reflection. The exhibition was

seen by thousands of people. 1,500 people visit Kolding Library every day. *JydskeVestkysten* is a regional newspaper, which also reaches out to readers in many other towns, giving expression to the message that religions have also their message for peace and harmony.

The Art Exhibition started from January 25, had the official opening on February 1 and concluded on February 22. We got many good remarks about the initiative, and some other artists called by phone, offering that if an exhibition would happen again next year, they would be glad to take part.

The Art Exhibition gives the common longing to do once again a creative observance of the WIHF, allowing cross-cultural talents in painting, photography, poetry, speeches and songs to weave a common vision for peace and harmony and discover we share our one humanity with these longings and aspirations in mind and heart for our common global existence.

Supporting documents:

1. Information Materials on the board as Introduction to the Art Exhibition in observance of UN World InterFaith Harmony Week:
 - a. Welcome in different languages (from Tværkulturelt Center in Copehagen)
 - b. Calendar 2019 of Holy Feasts and Celebrations of different religions (how many (allowed to use by Tværkulturelt Center in Copenhagen)
 - c. List of activities of Cross Cultural Ministry of Kolding Deanery to observe UN WIHW
 - d. Citations/Quotations and poems, and some were placed side by side during the exhibition some of the paintings or at the introductory board
 - e. The Song being sung by all to start the Official Opening program
 - f. The List of the 14 artists
2. Power point presentation of photos during the events.
3. Video on the Launching of the Art Exhibition, February 1, made by two students Mia and Mia Stuke:
<https://www.facebook.com/elizabeth.p.olesen/videos/10217980017234601/>
4. Article on Art Exhibition in a newspaper, *JydskeVestkysten*
<https://www.jv.dk/kolding/Fejring-over-hele-verden-Nu-er-Kolding-ogsaa-ende-af-FN-uge/artikel/2683841>
5. Link to Twitter posts on information about the event and other events related to the WIHW observance: <https://twitter.com/bethpadillo5>