

Jean-Pierre Rossie

Moroccan children's toys seen through the eyes of Greek children

Educational programme and workshop on play and making toys among the Anti-Atlas Mountain children in Southern Morocco, Museum of Childhood “Stathmos”, Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, National Railway Station Park, Nafplion, Greece, 5-8 July 2008.

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Programme animator: Jean-Pierre Rossie (fig. 1)



Inspired by toys made by Anti-Atlas children, some six to twelve-year-old children from Nafplion created toys during six workshops. After seeing two PowerPoint presentations, one on Ashura as a children's feast (Achoura : une fête des enfants au Maroc, 22 slides) and another on the connected masquerade in Tiznit (Achoura : la mascarade de Tiznit, 45 slides) (fig. 2), the Nafplote children made masks with natural and waste material mostly found in a small park around the museum (fig. 3-5).

2. The Ashûra masquerade of Tiznit, January 2007



3. Nafplion children designing models for making their masks



4. Nafplion girls creating rag masks



5. Nafplion boys creating cardboard masks



6. The Nafplion Children's Spirits



During the last two workshops these children viewed a PowerPoint presentation on making dolls (Poupées d'enfants dans l'Anti-Atlas, 35 slides) after which they created their own dolls (fig. 6-7).

7-8. Female and male dolls made by Nafplion children



The Nafplote children wearing their self-made masks, represented the *World Association of Children's Spirits* (fig. 9-10). This way they took over the reception of the 5th ITRA World Congress in Nafplion (9-11 July 2008).



9-10. The Children's Spirits in action



Then, Cleo Gougoulis, ITRA's president, put on a mask to become one of the Children's Spirits and she read the following declaration.



This is a Revolt of the Nafplion Children's Spirits

1. Due to the fact that our living space has been limited to the small park at the Stathmos Children's Museum we have decided to take over from this day on the whole town of Nafplion that will serve as a children's playground.
2. To support our claims we will use this 5th ITRA World Congress as our headquarters.
3. So that we will allow you to continue your proceedings in peace we demand that your President accepts to become one of the Nafplion Children's Spirits.
4. To do so she must first put on this powerful Mask...

I, Cleo Gougoulis, president of ITRA, being proclaimed a member of the Nafplion Children's Spirits, solemnly declare that the adults here present being a member of ITRA will support and defend the children's rights to play and to make toys themselves. This mask I wear and this Declaration will remain as a proof of the Pact between the International Toy Research Association and the World Association of Children's spirits. To support ITRA's work during this congress we, the Nafplion Children's Spirits, will bless you with the great and ancient ritual of water spraying.

Nafplion, July 9, 2008.

Note:

The author took photos 1-8. Artemis Yagou, Athens, took the photos 9-11 and has kindly given me the permission to use them.