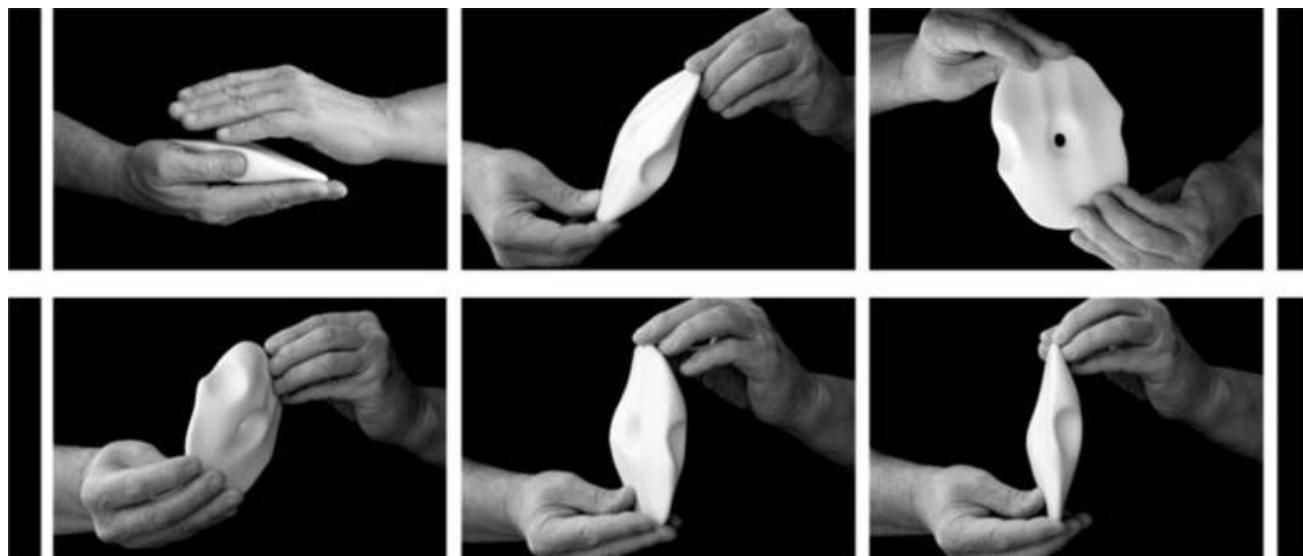


Sculpting for Peace with Guido Dettoni

Alex Catti (May 15, 2017)



On Saturday, May 13th, the Association of Italian American Educators welcomed Guido Dettoni della Grazia—the prolific Italian artist, sculptor, and creator of the “Global Peace Network.” While in New York, the artist held the United States’ first ever “Peace Gathering” at Hofstra University. Participants created their own wax sculptures to both find their own peace and to contribute to the global Peace Network.

New York’s [Hofstra University](#) [2] had the honor of hosting the United States’ first ever “Peace Gathering.” The event was part of an international series of “Encounters to Manifest Peace,” which comprise Italian artist [Guido Dettoni della Grazia](#) [3]’s “Peace Network.” The [Association of Italian American Educators \(AIAE\)](#) [4] welcomed the artist, who participated in a series of events including lectures at local schools, the AIAE gala, and the Sabato Italiano radio program hosted by AIAE President Josephine Maietta.

Guido Dettoni’s Creative Process

Guido Dettoni della Grazia’s artistic beginnings date back to the late 1950s. He began working with in both painting and sculpture but later gravitated more toward sculpting. He has worked with various media including—but not limited to—stained glass, metal, marble, and stone. Perhaps one of the most revolutionary concepts that he brought to the art world is the “Handsmatter” creative process, which he pioneered in the 1970s. This technique consists of working under a blindfold and shaping material solely through touch in order to create the final form. Handsmatter stimulates the senses; it can be therapeutic and even spiritual. Just as Dettoni feels the sculpture in his hands while creating it, his creations are meant to be felt by those who view them. As a result, some of these

sculptures are enlarged, so that they can be “inhabited” by those who come into contact with them.

Coming Together for Peace

This process is not solely for Dettoni’s own use. In fact, he uses it to connect people around the world. This past weekend, AIAE and Hofstra University hosted the United States’ first “Gathering to Manifest Peace.” Dettoni began the day by co-hosting the Sabato Italiano program on [Radio WRHU 88.7](#) [5], which airs every Saturday from 12pm-2pm. This program has a following in both the US and Italy, with listeners such as Tony Lobianco and Andrea Bocelli. During the radio show, the artist explained how the gathering would be conducted and how it creates peace. Anybody can partake in the gathering, regardless of age, which helps to create a sense of unity. Every participant shapes wax in his or her hands while under blindfold, just as Dettoni does with his own work. Dettoni explained, “Through their own hands, everyone will express his or her feelings of peace and desires for peace. It’s as if it were a prayer that became tactile.” These individual manifestations of peace are then photographed and uploaded to the [Peace Network website](#) [6], where they can be viewed by anyone around the world.

The First American Peace Gathering

Following the Sabato Italiano program, the Peace Gathering was held in a large dance studio in Hofstra University’s [Lawrence Herbert School of Communication](#) [7]. The participants gathered and were each handed a piece of wax that was first dipped in hot water in order to make it malleable. Next, the participants gathered in a circle, and each one was blindfolded.

The room fell silent as everybody began to shape their wax creations. As each person finished, Dettoni came around and placed the various wax sculptures in cold water in order to harden them. Once the last sculpture was collected, everyone’s blindfolds were removed, and they went to see their creations for the first time. As members of the group looked for their own sculptures, they began to realize that in order to find their work, they would have to use their hands—rather than their eyes—to identify their creations. Finally, once everyone had found his or her own individual sculpture, Dettoni photographed each one and asked the creators if they had a name for their piece.

The photographs of each sculpture will be uploaded to the Peace Network website.

As Dettoni was photographing each piece, members of the group chatted jovially with each other, recounting their feelings while creating their artwork and sharing bits of information about themselves. The tranquil and friendly atmosphere not only prompted participants to express their feelings of peace through their wax creations, but it also helped them to start dialogue with each other.

The room was buzzing with people speaking both Italian and English, a testament to the strength of the area’s Italian community. All in all, the day truly fulfilled its goal of generating peace and solidifying it in a tangible form.

Source URL: <http://iitaly.org/magazine/focus/facts-stories/article/sculpting-peace-guido-dettoni>

Links

- [1] <http://iitaly.org/files/guidodettonidellagrazia.jpg>
- [2] <http://www.hofstra.edu/home/index.html>
- [3] <http://www.nesher.org/guido.php>
- [4] <http://aiae.net/>
- [5] http://www.hofstra.edu/academics/colleges/soc/wrhu/wrhu_listen.html
- [6] <http://peacenetwerk.tk/>
- [7] <http://www.hofstra.edu/academics/colleges/soc/>

