

# Red Bricks Flying at the UN

Madeleine Hatz

Statement by the artist:

Part 1.

It is an honor for me to adorn these offices for the duration of the 60th Session of the General Assembly. As an International Swede, I feel proud of the legacy of courage of such diplomats as Dag Hammarskiold and a long line of individual diplomats; Raoul Wallenberg among them.

In the speeches preceding a recent UN day concert which I attended, the the ambition of the beginnings of the UN was invoked time and time again Today we need Dag Hammarskjold's idealism and perseverance.

As Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjold instituted the annual concert making it a tradition that music be used to inspire and uplift the men and women of the UN.

I mention music because of the kindred relationship I, as a painter, feel with it. As artists, whether musicians or painters, we often want to inspire, to encourage, to enflame. The large painting Red Bricks Flying with its golden red explosions of light mirrors the vibrant energy now palpable in the halls and offices of the UN. These bricks are color crystallized into material, and winds of change make them fly.

In a lecture on multilateralism, Jan Eliasson has called for " a spirit of urgency and common purpose during this 60th session". And he further makes this statement:

"I believe we are at an important juncture in history. In a world of much insecurity and mistrust, do we redouble our efforts to create a multilateral system that can deal with today's challenges? Or do we retreat behind our borders, trying to build up our defenses against

modern day threats, but finding that we cannot build them high enough?"

## Part 2.

I grew up in Stockholm, Sweden. The spirit of international cooperation was very much part of the moral code in the education at that time. When Dag Hammarskjold was killed in a plane crash in 1961 it was a reality that hit everyone. I remember how people cried at home and at school.

On 9/11 2001, I was here in New York City, living in the Village. On that morning, at about 10 am shortly after the towers had fallen, I went out into the street. The sky was intensely blue and in this incongruously sunny light, one could see the first people coming from the ground zero area. Many were covered with ash, looking like zombies, walking north on Broadway. At Union Square someone had covered the entire plaza with paper and was now handing out markers. People would scribble on the paper covered ground, write messages or express themselves however they needed.

I grabbed a marker and drew what came to mind at that moment, the UN globe with olive leaves. That symbol along with other symbols from 60's. like "ban the bomb" showed up multiplied on signs at peace demonstrations a few months later. It was the beginning of the new Peace Movement.

In the days that followed the fatal morning of 9/11, I started a project I called Blue Orange. It was a project in multiple forms, including painting, performances and video. I made a web site and posted the Blue Orange Manifesto, calling for global thinking. It was a spontaneous reaction to the increasing expressions of militarism and patriotism, everywhere in the urban space and in the media. As a New Yorker, I was nauseated by the political exploitation of people's hearts at a time of fragility.

As an artist, I feel the right and the duty to reach for nothing less than utopia. My paintings are visions. It is in the nature of art to seek truth, and to be as explicit about it as possible.

Now that I have the honor to present my work in the workspace of the UN, I'd like to spell out this vital question:  
What organization is there in the world other than the UN that could take on this task of "creating a multilateral system"? And how could this system be effective in "dealing with today's global challenges" without a **real shift in power**, towards the UN and its General Assembly!

New York, November 18, 2005

[www.MadeleineHatz.com](http://www.MadeleineHatz.com)