

A first person account from Roland Wacagone, sent to Peter McCaughey 17th April 2020

Story of an airborne gondola between Scotland, Venice and Normandy

Caroline and myself live in Normandy. We were for 7 days in Venice to attend to the birth of our first grand daughter. The suspense was growing every day. In the meantime, our son Remi and his wife Flavia shared with us a lot of strolls and visits of the 2018 Biennale of architecture exhibitions. Coincidentally, on the eve of our departure back to France, we passed near the Palazzo Zenobbio where there is the Scotland's collateral event called « The Happenstance ». A young hostess invited us to enter and visit. We seized this opportunity and appreciated the multi authors and contributive dimension of the Happenstance. I saw a sign saying that, visitors could contribute and take part to the event if they had any creation to share.

It happens that I had completed a week before a film on our Handiciel venture. This film shows our trip to the Alps at the Coupe Icare Festival and more precisely our team involved in the mascarade flights

with a gondola. We had specially built a gondola around a wheelchair and flew with Bruno who is paraplegic and myself as a gondolier-pilot.



As we had fulfilled this dream and being in Venice, I had the dream of sharing this film somewhere in the Serenissima. The Happenstance was maybe the opportunity to project the flying gondola on a screen of Venice. I dared to explain this farfetched project of this film screening. There were several uncertainties : passing for a fool, having an opening tonight for this projection, getting the authorisation from the organisers and what about the awaited birth ? The guide granted us his confidence and agreed to ask to the organiser Peter Mc Caughey for inserting us at some time between the folk dance and the other films planned tonight. A SMS will be sent to me if it is OK. Back at the flat with Remi and Flavia, we agree that we can take part to the event, but they will stay home because she is tired. Meanwhile the SMS from Peter saying « Yes, you can » arrives ! I take the USB key with the film and cross Venice to go back to the Scottish Pavilion. At my arrival, I 'm welcomed by Peter who is discussing with a young lady. I do not recognize her at first and thinks she belongs to the organization. But she gives me a warm « hello Roland » and kisses me. I look at her more carefully and recognize her. I haven't met for months



but she lives opposite our home in Evreux ; Julie is a friend of my other son Timon. And is here to prepare a contribution to the event for the end of the week. Another astonishing glimpse of providence !

The evening begins in a warm atmosphere of garden party. With music and dances. As daylight declines, the films dedicated to the art and to the lagune are projected on the big screen, alternating with explanations.



As the turn of our film on the flying gondola arrives in a few seconds, my wife receives a phone call from our son. She announces me that our grand daughter is born. Her name is Gaia. Full of émoti n , we share this good news with Peter as he was about to introduce me to the assembly. As he gives word to me, he is proud to announce something very special . My first words are to say that Venice counts a newly born and youngest Venician, Gaia' birth is live during this event Happenstance. I 'm so moved that it amplifies my enthusiasm as I present the venture of the film. The pictures speak for us, they tell what is possible when a group embarks on an adventure in which paragliding, sharing with disabled persons, meeting a challenge and team work are involved.

