

A SAUNA, A LAKE – BUT NO BIRCHES

THE ART CAMP RAPID STIRRED UP A PORTUGUESE SMALL TOWN IN A CREATIVE WAY



A sauna, a lake and the moon. Something very familiar, something very Finnish, but at the same time something strange. The cicadas are chirping. The bath whisk is made out of olive branches!

A **FINNISH SAUNA** was built in the small town of Avisi in Portugal last summer, as part of an international multi-art community art project, RAPID. One of the programme numbers during the week was the great Mobile Performance, which took over the alleys and squares of Avisi by multiform music, dance, and visual art and film presentations.

Five students from different fields of art and three artist lecturers from the Arts Academy at Turku University of Applied arts partook in the RAPID camp. They created different events in collaboration with their English and Portuguese colleagues. Also the townspeople, who were enticed into collective work on the arts events, had a central role.

– The city people made dolls for the puppet theatre, and even people who could not play, tried out different instruments. The sauna was a special attraction, and the most eager ones wanted one in their backyard, recounts the Arts Academy lecturer, visual artist **Susana Nevado**.

Also **Timo Varamäki**, a student of Theatre Art, who participated in the Avisi RAPID event, was very pleased with it:

– It was great to see how we could, as a group, integrate with the local people so that the result was a grand ensemble. Also it was great to be able to do things together with artists from different fields.

– It gave a strong feeling of work in the arts branch making sense. Art helps to bring people together, says Timo Varamäki.

– Even though we could at times have linguistic difficulties with the Portuguese, art offered a common language and objective, Susana Nevado points out.

At the time of the interview, the RAPID project in England, Great Yarmouth is to take place in October. In the summer of 2009, the international RAPID camp will be arranged in Turku.

RAPID is a project funded by the EU Culture Programme, which in Finland and Turku is administered and funded by the project unit of the Turku City Youth Centre. In addition to Susana Nevado, the lecturers from the Arts Academy who participated in the event in Portugal were sculptor **Kari-Petteri Kakko** and the puppet theatre artist **Aapo Repo**. The participating students were **Timo Varamäki**, **Maija Linturi**, **Paula Salmikangas**, **Jonna Koivumäki** and **Aino Juutilainen**. ■

