

‘Hansel and Gretel’ ditches the gingerbread house for plastic and recyclables

By Annelle S. Tayao
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PATRICIA Thoma with students of German-European School Manila, who are wearing the costumes for their play, “Hansel and Gretel”

A group of children, all dressed in colorful plastic bags, begin to spin around, as if under a strange spell. One by one, they fall to the ground, a bed of shredded paper cushioning their fall.

Before you think the worst, don’t worry—this is no scene in the slums, but a performance by the students of the German-European School Manila (GESM) entitled “Fairytale,” which they showcased recently in Greenbelt 5, outside Galerie Hans Brumann.

The five-minute performance was a teaser to the school’s “Hansel and Gretel” show on Dec. 7, 6 p.m., at the SM Mall of Asia. Directed by Hannilete Diola, it also highlights the children’s costumes, made from recycled materials like plastic bags, which were created with the help of German artist Patricia Thoma.

“The idea is to make something beautiful out of rubbish,” said Thoma, who worked with GESM students on the costumes and set of “Hansel and Gretel” for around one month. Thoma has created Chinese and Japanese dresses using recycled packaging materials. She also paints and illustrates for children’s books.

“It’s easy to work with recycled materials. The children handled them very well,” she added. “The designs are all basically theirs.”



Rachel Carey, 12, in a floor-length coat and fluffy wig.

Most of the materials Thoma and the students used were plastic. These were converted to brightly colored dresses, coats, even a jumpsuit, with rectangular patterns. The kids also made wigs—some looked like they had afro hairstyles, while others wore oversized, floor-length braids.



GERMAN artist Patricia Thoma stands beside a qipao, or a one-piece Chinese dress which she made out of recycled packaging materials in China.

Five winners

These costumes will all be posted on Facebook as part of Goethe-Institut Philippinen's "Märchen goes Facebook" (Fairytale goes to Facebook) campaign. Just visit www.facebook.com/goetheinstitut.philippinen, and like your favorite design. Five winners will get the following prizes: a language course at the Goethe-Institut Philippinen; a "Hänsel and Gretel" book in German; and three shopping bags with the "Märchen goes Facebook" logo designed by Thoma.

"It's pretty amazing what you can do with recycled materials," said Didi Dee of Galerie Hans Brumann and Hiraya Gallery. "That's also part of our vision, and it's good that [Goethe-Institut] has an artist who shares the same vision." "Fairytale" is Goethe-Institut and Galerie Hans Brumann's first collaborative show. Aside from "Fairytale" and "Hänsel and Gretel," part of the "Märchen goes Facebook" campaign is an exhibit of Thoma's illustrations at the Goethe-Institut Philippinen (Adamson Center, 121 LP Leviste St., Makati City; www.goethe.de/manila).