

The Statue of Liberty. Lady Liberty, Mother of exiles, Mother Liberty.

We were given the task of building a representation of the Statue of Liberty to be part of the 4th of July celebrations here in Milan. We were asked not to simply re create a lookalike statue, which would have just been a small, perhaps boring, version of the original statue but were asked to try to combine into our version elements which linked to the Expo.

As the Expo is centered around the theme of food and sustainability we came up with a few ideas which we thought might be fun to include. We started building the statue by using recycled materials some of which were used as food packaging, pizza boxes for example and using other recycled materials, an old mannequin, newspapers and so on. As we built the statue we came across a number of challenges. First the statue just looked like a paper mache copy of a random statue so we decided that we had to add the colour of the original to make it seem at least a little similar. We had thought of using an ice cream cone, made from mod-rock, instead of the original lamp but decided that it might seem a little frivolous and we didn't want to be seen as if we were poking fun at what is arguably one of the most important and symbolic landmarks in the United States of America.

We decided to use instead of the lamp, which the original statue holds in its right hand, a wooden spoon, a symbol of food and cooking. We selected a wooden spoon which also has a measuring space to help cook the correct amount of pasta. We thought that this symbol of food and of measuring portions was a nice link to the theme of the Expo. A symbol of sharing and not wasting by using the correct amount.

We also took inspiration from the sonnet "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus which is on a plaque at the foot of the Statue of Liberty and tried to incorporate some of the words onto the body of our statue. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses..."

The term "Mother of exiles" struck a chord with us and we thought our statue could be called "Mother Liberty". Mothers are providers for their families. They look after, provide, feed and care for their children. Our statue has another link to food and providing in a custom built apron which she holds in her left hand. It is an apron into which we have incorporated 3 different types of plant. A strawberry plant, an aubergine plant and a tomato plant.

These symbolize growth, food and life. It is a living element on our statue. We hope someone will water the plants and keep them alive. Perhaps visitors to the 4th of July celebrations could interact with the statue by watering our plants. Taking care for our statue as a mother cares for her children.

We built the plinth the statue stands on and tried to paint it so it looks a little like the plinth the real statue stand on in America. We hope that people will look at our statue and see that we have tried to be creative in producing a tribute to and not a copy of the Statue of Liberty. The Statue of liberty is an icon of freedom and the American dream. We learned a lot about the statue while producing our version and we had a lot of fun trying to combine elements of it with the theme of the Expo.

The students of the international school of Milan.