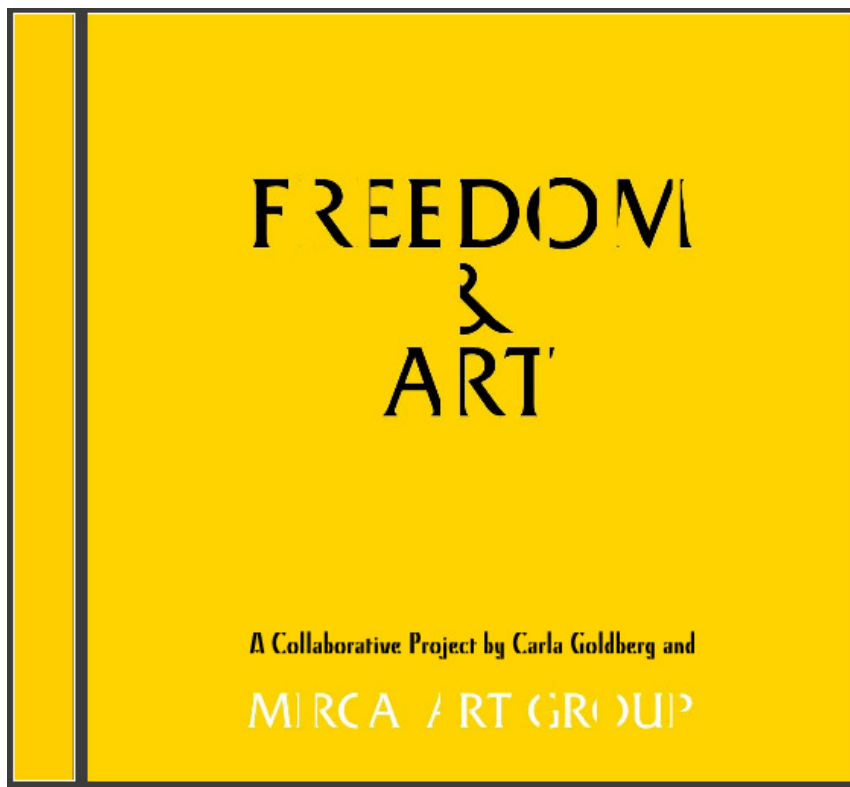


PRESS RELEASE



The Voice of Art in a Battle for Freedom

International artists create book in support of key political figure

On October 2nd, 2008, the Mirca Art Group, an international coalition of professional artists, will release their landmark collaborative effort, a book entitled *Freedom & Art*, to the public. The book features 74 works of art, each accompanied by a short statement about the synergy of freedom and art in our world, and is being sold to raise funds in support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a key political figure who has been under house arrest in Myanmar (formerly Burma) for the past 18 years over her bid for political freedom.

The book will be released to the public initially through an event called “Set a Book Free” on Mahatma Gandhi’s Birthday, October 2nd when all artists featured within the pages of the book will place a copy donated by Internet-based publishing site Blurb.com in a public location to raise interest.

The project was born out of artmesh, a social media website that allows artists to network via forums and groups, similar to the way users interact on social mega-site Facebook.com. Swedish founder Stefan Tunedal created the Mirca Art Group as a private forum within artmesh that would focus on fostering art-orientated discussions in an open, tolerant atmosphere. The Mirca Art group eventually grew to include nearly 250 artists from six continents and over thirty countries. Aung San Suu Kyi and her battle for freedom – a passion of Tunedal’s – became a rallying cause for the group and is the inspiration for the book.

According to Carla Goldberg, US-based coordinator and senior editor for *Freedom & Art*, the book was meant to harness the energy and passion of the artists for Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi into an actionable strategy to aid in her release. On the effort to work with artists from around the world, Carla says, "The project has brought our group together in a whole new way. There has been a lot of wonderful back-and-forth on message boards and everyone has been willing to offer their individual talents where needed." On the effort to assemble the work of the artists together, she says, "It has been like assembling a beautiful puzzle...each piece is unique and, in the end, everything has fit together to create a complete work of art."

After its initial release to the public in October the book will be available for sale through the official website of Amnesty International and Amazon.com. All proceeds from the sale of the book *Freedom & Art* will be donated to Amnesty International to support efforts being made on behalf of Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi's . A traveling exhibit featuring a selection of the art published in the book is also planned. It will open February 14, 2009, at the Mount Beacon Fine Arts Gallery in Beacon, NY.

"I wanted to see what I can do from this safe studio in Stockholm where it would be impossible to even think of imprisoning an elected (official)," says Tunedal when asked about his passion for the plight Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi. "A woman like her should not be treated like this. She has the right to be free," adds Hungarian artist Krisztina Asztalos, writing from the other side of Europe. "Aung San Suu Kyi's efforts...are an inspiration for the many people throughout the world who are striving to attain democracy, human rights and ethnic conciliation."

By working together in the spirit of global collaboration, these artists have become a united voice of hope and pierced places where freedom has failed with the liberating power of artistic expression.



Inaya Hodeib
Beirut, Lebanon

My life line has so far taken me through five brutal wars both civil and invasive. I've seen a lot of people dying and killing in the name of a cause that they think would bring them freedom. But sadly freedom is not a physical entity and alas death brings forth more bloodshed. Freedom is a state of mind, a simple feeling of gratitude and a divine happiness that one can find no matter how dark and deep the pit is. Freedom can not be taken or bought it is only made and felt from within.



WEBSITE: www.inayahodeib.blogspot.com



WEBSITE: www.melissatheredpainter.20fr.com

Elly Prestegaard
Bergen, Norway



On this platform the key to my personal and artistic freedom is in my own hands. It is a fragile state of mind. My freedom may look different from your freedom, but it comes from the same source: "The right to choose"



WEBSITE: www.ellyp.com



Goh Ideta Tokyo, Japan

Everyone has a freedom. It's just a matter of the way of perceiving it and the way of using it.

<http://gohideta.com>

There are 74 Mirca artists from 27 countries represented.

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, and USA.

Anders, Dagmar-Austria
Andersen, Luise USA
Asztalos, Kriztina-Hungary
Baistrocchi, Giulio-Italy
Baiwir, Leopold- Belgium

Bayer Domanoski, Linda-USA
Begerhotta, Manvendra-India
Bonnici, Martin- Australia
Breig, Renee-Sweden

Cavalli, Luiz-Brazil
Chavez, Daniel-USA
Chicago, Kim-USA
Cousins, Scott Jeffrey-USA
Danette, Kimberley-USA

D'Assumpcao, Alberto-
Portugal
Davidson, Mick-UK & the
Netherlands
Dickerson, Rickie-USA
Erdos, Aniko-Hungary
Eryk, Mark-USA
Evans,Leo-USA
Fangano, Alessio-Germany
Flaitz, Carol-USA
Follows, Andrew-Australia
Fortia, Adel-Libya
Gador, Maciej-Poland
Goldberg, Carla- USA
Gollapudi,Narasimha
Murthy-India
Gordon Harris,Cassandra-
USA
Guna, Bianca-Canada
Heaslip, Nicoll-Australia
HEGO-Germany
Hodeib, Inaya- Lebanon
Ideta, Goh- Japan
Kinsey, Doug-USA

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Kitipov, Angel-Bulgaria
Koedijk, Rob-the Netherlands
Konstantinova, Svetlana-
Russia
Krol, Piotr-Poland
Lemaitre, Isabelle-Italy
Lennox, Owen-UK
Lensen, Carla-the
Netherlands
Longueville,Laurence-
Switzerland
Mahuba, Ali-Malaysia &
USA
Malcom, Alison-UK
Martin, Donna-USA
McCabe, Midori-USA
Moore, Brad Michael-USA
Murphy, Don W.-USA
Murphy, Linda-USA
Oathman, Tourya-USA
Oeser, Dagmar-Germany
Prestegaard, Elly- Norway
Petre, Catherine-Belgium
Renouf, Naomi-UK

Rimell, Bruce-UK
Roldan, Pilar-Spain
Selvon, Serge-Germany
Severin, Constantin-
Romania
Singh, Prem-India
Staples, Christopher-USA
Steckbauer, Melissa-USA
Steens, Anette-Norway
Stromberg, Annika-Sweden
Thomas, Simon-Sweden
Tunedal, Katarina- Sweden
Tunedal, Stefan-Sweden
Tschaikowski, Anatoli-
German
Urum, Evrensel-Turkey
Urum, Sevgi-Turkey
Vaganov, Igor-Russia
van der Merwe, Belinda-
South Africa
Ward Kelly, Stacey-USA
Winchester, Elizabeth-USA
Yoon, Mimi-USA

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