



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 Stephen 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 will be donated to Amnesty International to support efforts being made on behalf of Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi's release. 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.