

ArtVenture Prize to Champion Creative Freedom

24 October, 2008, London – A unique creative-prize designed to highlight the use of arts in the promotion of human rights has brought to attention a forgotten frontline of artists defending their freedom of expression at great personal sacrifice.

The ArtVenture Freedom to Create Prize has been embraced by artists on the frontline, the global arts in development sector and the human rights community, with over 800 applications from over 80 countries. Entries close on 31 October.

The prize is comprised of three categories and will carry a total prize of US\$ 100,000. It will be judged by a panel of eminent artists, commentators and human rights experts, including Augusto Boal, Andrew Dickson, Htein Lin, Samira Makhmalbaf, Carlos Reyes-Manzo, and Ana Tzarev. The winners will be announced in London on 27 November.

The prize was established by the philanthropic organisation, ArtVenture, in association with London-based freedom of expression defenders Article 19.

ArtVenture Director, Robert Ashforth, said: “Freedom to Create is a cornerstone of just and fair societies and is essential to fostering prosperity and peace. We are delighted the ArtVenture Freedom to Create Prize has brought attention to this important issue, and the special role that artists play by promoting empathy and understanding and confronting discrimination and oppression.”

Mr. Ashforth added: “This is not a typical art prize. It does not simply judge the skill of the artist, but rather it recognises how the artist has used their work to promote awareness and alert people to the plight of others.”

Executive Director of Article 19, Dr Agnes Callamard, said the prize would play an important role in promoting the freedom of expression: “The ArtVenture Freedom to Create Prize is a timely reminder that the Freedom to Create must be protected. Intolerance for dissent and unpopular expressions, including artistic, is on the increase. Artists make societies aware of the existence of abuses. They open our eyes, ears, imagination – all our senses – to the horror of wars, torture, poverty, racism and violence against women.”

The main category in the ArtVenture Freedom to Create Prize category is open to artists in all creative fields including the visual arts, film, music, dance and literature. The prize will be awarded to an individual or group that uses their creative work to promote human rights and freedom of expression in a restrictive or repressive environment. The winner of this award will receive \$50,000 (\$25,000 to the artist or group and \$25,000 to a nominated organisation to further the cause the artwork has highlighted).

The ArtVenture Freedom to Create Youth Prize is open to artists who are under the age of 18 with the winner receiving \$25,000 (\$10,000 towards an education scholarship and \$15,000 for a nominated advocacy issue). The final category, The ArtVenture Freedom to Create Imprisoned Artist Prize, focuses on artists who are currently imprisoned due to their work. The winner will receive \$25,000 towards supporting their family, paying legal costs and supporting advocacy efforts.

For more information about the ArtVenture Freedom to Create Prize please visit www.freedomtocreateprize.com

About ArtVenture, Art in Action

ArtVenture is a philanthropic organisation which seeks to harness art and culture to improve lives in meaningful ways. We believe philanthropic programmes delivered through the arts have a special ability to reach people and play a vital role in harnessing the creativity needed for human development.

ArtVenture's goal is to alleviate suffering and to provide solutions that address the root causes of poverty, illness and conflict. We endeavour to bring a positive message of hope and joy to places of turmoil and despair.

ArtVenture is an advocate and practitioner of "Performance Philanthropy". We apply investment tools and standards to our business. We believe that giving should be informed by an investment mindset that stresses clarity of purpose, sound planning, wellinformed choices and measurable impact.

www.artventure.com

About Article 19

Article 19 is a London-based human rights organisation which promotes the defence and promotion of freedom of expression and freedom to information worldwide.

Established in 1987, Article 19 fights for all hostages of censorship, defends dissenting voices that have been muzzled and campaigns against law and practices that silence. The group takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

www.article19.org

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