



MEDIA RELEASE

March 2008

Is there still a need, under the new Rudd government, to raise money for charities that aid asylum seekers in Australia? Unfortunately yes.

The **Bid for Freedom Art Auction** is a mighty collaboration between a spectrum of Australian artists, the Brigidine nuns, Friends of Maribyrnong Detainees, and myriad volunteers to raise money for the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP).

“Why are you still wanting money for asylum seekers? (Thanks to John Howard) the boats have stopped coming, haven’t they? And anyway, now that the Rudd Government is elected, there’s no longer a problem, is there?” These are common questions asked of the organizers of the fundraiser.

“The new Labor Government’s support for refugees has not yet been tested,” claims Ann Morrow, Coordinator of the B4F Art Auction. “To date, the burden is still on charitable organisations like the Brigidines, a small group of nuns working from Albert Park, to provide everything from baby formula to accommodation, torture and trauma counseling, school books, legal advice and medical care.”

In many ways the needs of asylum seekers are just as great in 2008 as previously. “A steady stream of potential refugees continues to seek asylum in Australia from every country where there is social and/or political unrest,” says Brigidine nun, Sister Brigid Arthur. “Before and after they apply for Protection visas they need assistance. Many who have gained a Permanent Visa need help accessing jobs, and assistance in trying to re-unite with their families. This can be traumatic, time consuming and costly. Often without knowledge of English, they are utterly dependent for day to day living on charities like ours.”

This year the Bid 4 Freedom Art Auction is commemorating the life of Wolfgang Sievers. Wolfgang was one of Australia's and the world's defining photographers and himself a refugee. Before he died in 2007, for the Bid 4 Freedom Art Auction, Wolfgang donated three photographs which will go under the hammer, including his personal favourite, Ropemaking, Miller's Rope, 1962, Gelatin Silver, B&W, 49 x 39 cm. taken at the Miller rope factory in Brunswick. This he felt reflected the dignity of man as a worker. The two others include the Hamersley ranges in the Pilbara, near Wittenoom, 1975 Colour, 40 x 49cm and Capitol Theatre, 1973 Colour, 50 x 57cm.

More than 100 Australian artists have generously donated works for auction as their contribution to alleviating this desperate situation. Artists include Juan Davila, Inge King, Stieg Persson, John Howley, Mike Parr, David Larwill, Joyce Evans and Vincent Fantauzzo. Exciting works - paintings, photographs, sculpture, jewellery - are on offer and bargains are to be expected.

The Exhibition, free to the public, opens on Wednesday April 16th: weekdays 10.00-5.00; weekends and public holidays 1.00-5.00.

Julian Burnside will launch the Exhibition at an invitation-only preview on April 16th.

The Auction from **2.00 - 5.00pm Sunday April 27th**

To view the art works check the web-page: www.bid4freedom.org

For more information contact Mary-Lou Howie on 0401 811 893

BID FOR FREEDOM
ART EXHIBITION AND AUCTION
Preview exhibition 16 – 27 April 08
Auction 27 April
The Glen Eira City Council Gallery
Cnr Glen Eira and Hawthorn Roads, Caulfield, Vic. 3162
Melways Ref: 68 A2