

Stories on Human Rights

by Filmmakers, Artists and Writers

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An initiative of :



A Project of :



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SUMMARY

The Partners	p. 3
Press release	p. 4
The genesis of a worldwide artistic project	p. 5
A film of six themes and 22 short-movies	p. 6
1 / Culture	p. 7
2 / Development	p. 8
3 / Dignity and Justice	p. 9
4 / Environment	p. 10
5 / Gender	p. 11
6 / Participation	p. 12
List of screenings	p. 13
Stories on Human Rights, the book	p. 14
History:	
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights	p. 16
Human Rights today	p. 17
ART for The World	p. 18
Partners	p. 19

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by Filmmakers, Artists and Writers

PARTNERS

On the occasion of



An initiative of :



OFFICE FOR THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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PRESS RELEASE

22 short-movies for the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Internationally recognised **filmmakers, artists** and **writers**, have joined forces to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by contributing to a unique film project composed by twenty-two 3 minutes short-movies inspired by the six themes of the Universal Declaration: **culture, development, dignity and justice, environment, gender and participation**. Stories on Human Rights is an initiative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and produced by ART *for The World*, NGO based in Geneva and Milan.

Stories on Human Rights is the first large film project bounding together artists and film makers in a single project on cinema. Participants have been selected for their strong artistic qualities and their deep interest towards the promotion of Human Rights : Marina Abramovic (Serbia/The Netherlands), Hany Abu-Assad (Palestine), Armagan Ballantyne (New Zeland), Sergei Bodrov (Russia), Charles De Meaux (France), Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster&Ange Leccia (France), Runa Islam (UK/Bangladesh), Francesco Jodice (Italy), Etgar Keret & Shira Geffen (Israel), Zhan Gke Jia (China), Murali Nair (India), Idrissa Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso), Pipilotti Rist (Switzerland), Walter Salles e Daniela Thomas (Brazil), Saman Salour (Iran), Sarkis (France), Bram Schouw (The Netherlands), Teresa Serrano (Mexico), Abderrahmane Sissako (Mauritania), Pablo Trapero (Argentina), Apichatpong Weerasethakul (Thailand) and Jasmila Zbanic (Bosnia).

The movies have been shot in more than 15 countries around the world and in different languages. They will exist as single short movie and will also be presented altogether **in a long feature film of 1h and 20 min**, subtitled in the **six official languages of the UN** (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish)

The film will be accompanied by a **book**, published by Electa, and will contain interviews to the film makers and the artists, still frames of the short movies and backstage pictures as well as contributions by **twelve authors**, including **five Nobel prize winners**, referring to the six themes of the Declaration: Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Khaled Hosseini, Roberto Saviano, Naguib Mafuz, Elfriede Jelinek, Ruth Ozeki, José Saramago, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Assia Djébar, Nuruddin Farah, Toni Morrison and Mo Yan.

EUROPEAN AVANT PREMIERE, PARIS DECEMBER 10TH

The long feature film will be screened on the occasion of an exceptional event at the presence of **Bernard Kouchner**, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and **Rama Yade**, Secretary of State in charge for Foreign Affairs and Human Rights. The screening will take place on Wednesday, December 10th at Theatre National de Chaillot.

From 2009, the short movies and the long feature will be screened around the world, especially in film festivals, cinemas, schools, museums and cultural institutions. They will also be broadcasted on the most important international TV channels.



© Francesco Jodice : A Water Tale Kazakhstan

GENESIS OF A WORLDWIDE ARTISTIC PROJECT

The project entitled *Stories on Human Rights* derives from an initiative on the part of the High Commission of Human Rights. It is composed of a dialogue between images and texts inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The NGO *ART for The World* was entrusted with the realisation of this project and commissioned to direct it.



© Abderrahmane Sissako : N'Dimagou (Dignité)

THE FILM

Stories on Human Rights became a reality thanks to ART for The World, the creative involvement of numerous film-directors and artists, the financial support of the European Commission, the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DGCID), the French Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, the Brazilian Social Services of Commerce (SESC) and the French National Centre of Cinematography (CNC).

The 22 film-directors involved were chosen both for their talent (Zhang-Ke Jia won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival, Jasmila Zbanic the Golden Bear in Berlin, Hany Abu-Assad a Golden Globe...) as well as for their commitment to social issues and their deep concern for Human Rights. The various backgrounds and sensibilities deployed in this same global project have produced a multiple-voiced representation of the meaning of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) at the international level.

THE BOOK

In order to give greater impact to a film unique in its kind, ART for The World worked together with ELECTA Editors so as to publish a plurilingual book to back up the film. Several writers of international fame contributed to this book, including Nobel prize winners, among which Elfriede Jelinek, Naguib Mahfouz and Toni Morrison, guiding the public in the understanding of the universal character of the Declaration.

THE POSTERS

Last but not least, ART for The World and the New Academy of Fine Arts (NABA) in Milan opened a competition for Posters under the title Shake your rights, open to students all over the world; the latter participated and created projects which will be exhibited worldwide. The six winning posters – one for each theme – will be seen throughout the world and made available on the Internet so that they may be downloaded and printed freely.

Tackling the ideals inscribed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – namely Culture, Development, Dignity and Justice, Environment, Gender and Participation – this project was not carried out in the spirit of an advertising campaign, but as the artistic expression of the message of Humanity, Liberty and Friendship inscribed in the Universal Declaration.



© Marina Abramovic : *Dangerous Games*



© Sergei Bodrov : *The Voice*

A FILM OF 6 THEMES AND 22 SHORT-MOVIES

Twenty two short movies by international filmmakers inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the six themes: Culture, Development, Dignità and Justice, Environment, Gender, Participation. The project by ART for The World is unique.

Michael Galasso : Composer, violinist and musical director Michael Galasso was born in Hammond, Louisiana in 1949. A musician of classical formation, this violin virtuoso has been experimenting for 30 years on a melodic and rhythmical synthesis in which his affinities with Baroque music are entwined with his American heritage as well as with Iranian and central Asia traditions. Michael Galasso began his career composing music for Robert Wilson's *Overture* (1972) and more recently he has written the score for Ibsen's *Lady from the Sea* (1998), Strindberg's *A Dreamplay* (1998), Chekhov's *Three Sisters* (2001), and for the theatrical version of *The Cabinet of Doktor Caligari* (2002). Recent film scores include Wong Kar-Wai's *Chunking Express* and *In the Mood for Love*, as well as many other European, Iranian, Turkish and American movies. Galasso also has made numerous sound/music installations, including the Giorgio Armani Retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2000 (the first sound installation in the New York Guggenheim's history) and the Guggenheim Bilbao in 2001.

THE SHORT MOVIES :

The short-movies are subtitled in the 6 official languages of the UN: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Chinese.

- ▶ ***Dangerous Games*** Marina Abramovic (Serbia/The Netherlands)
- ▶ ***A boy, a Wall and a Donkey*** Hany Abu-Assad (Palestine)
- ▶ ***Lili & Ra*** Armagan Ballantyne (New Zealand)
- ▶ ***The Voice*** Sergei Bodrov (Russia)
- ▶ ***Garish Sun*** Charles de Meaux (France)
- ▶ ***Des films à faire*** Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster & Ange Leccia
- ▶ ***Trust*** Runa Islam (United Kingdom / Bangladesh)
- ▶ ***A Water Tale*** Francesco Jodic (Italy)
- ▶ ***What About Me?*** Etgar Keret & Shira Geffen
- ▶ ***Black Breakfast*** Zhang-Ke Jia (China)
- ▶ ***The Crossing*** Murali Nair (India)
- ▶ ***La Mangue*** Idrissa Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso)
- ▶ ***I Drink Your Bathwater*** Pipilotti Rist (Switzerland)
- ▶ ***Voyage*** Daniela Thomas (Brazil)
- ▶ ***The Final Match*** Saman Salour (Iran)
- ▶ ***La Victoire sur les sachets*** Sarkis (France)
- ▶ ***Impasse*** Bram Schouw (The Netherlands)
- ▶ ***Glass Ceiling*** Teresa Serrano (Mexico)
- ▶ ***N'Dimagou – Dignity*** Abderrahmane Sissako (Mauritania)
- ▶ ***Sobras*** Pablo Trapero (Argentina)
- ▶ ***Mobile Men*** Apichatpong Weerasethakul (Thailand)
- ▶ ***Participation*** Jasmila Zbanic (Bosnia)

CULTURE

The concept of Human Rights is bound closely to the belief that culture is precious and central to our identity. The way we are born, live and die is affected by the culture to which we belong, so to take away our cultural heritage is to deny us our identity. At the same time, we can all benefit from our experience of other cultures and we have something to offer them in return. The Universal

Declaration of Human Rights says “everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community” and by implication, this also means that no-one has the right to dominate, direct or eradicate that culture or impose theirs upon us.

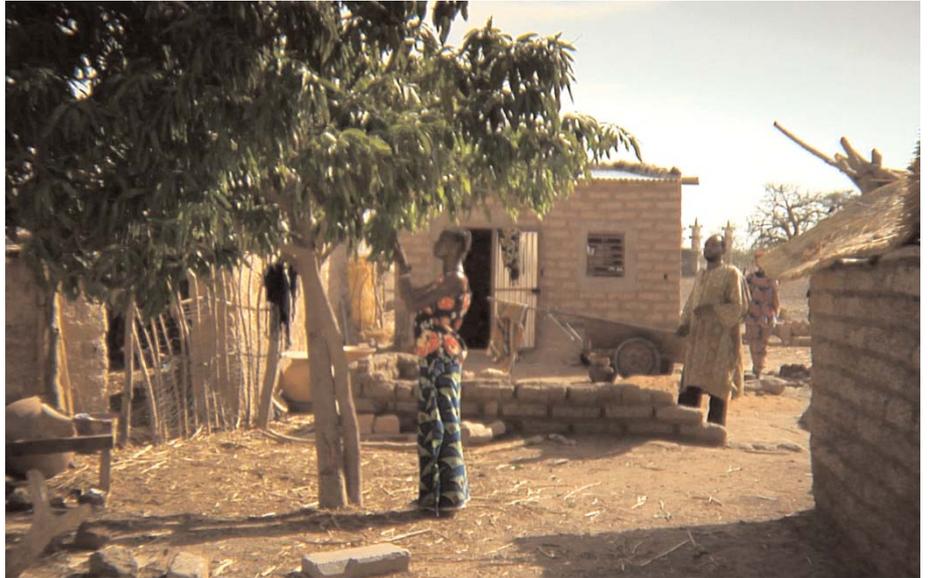


© Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster & Ange Leccia : Des films à faire

DIRECTORS' AND ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES :

- ▶ **Marina Abramovic** was born in Belgrade in 1946. As an artist, she analyses and defies the limits of both our physical and our mental potentials through her performances. Part of the artistic trend of Body Art, she has lacerated and whipped herself, frozen her body on blocks of ice and has taken psychoactive and muscle effective substances which induced the loss of consciousness. Her work can be seen in many major public collections worldwide.
- ▶ **Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster & Ange Leccia**
Born in 1965, Dominique Gonzalez's talent asserts itself in various media: film projections, photographs and installations. Her short movies and installations aim at representing the very moments when individuals come across places, thus underlining the individual nuances of cultural and social contexts. She includes landscapes and parks in her artistic vision, as can be seen with her series entitled *Cosmodrome* and *A Plan for Escape* which won the Marcel Duchamp award in 2002. In 2007, the City of Paris celebrated her with *Expodrome*, a retrospective of her artistic career.
Born in 1952, Ange Leccia specialised in projecting large-scale videos dealing with personal and public dramas. His work has been on display in France and in the USA (Atlanta, Huston, and Milwaukee).
These two artists collaborated to produce the short-film *Île de Beauté* (title not translated) in 1993.
- ▶ **Daniela Thomas** is regularly involved in directing, producing, editing films and writing scripts. She has even been head designer for TV series in her home country. Among her major works are films such as *The First Day*, *Foreign Land* and *Behind the Sun*. The three bear witness to the unique dejected eye she casts on her country, her contemporaries and on human relationships in general. The segment she directed for the collective work *Paris, je t'aime* (title not translated) is a perfect and significant example of this. She writes and directs most of her long-feature films in collaboration with Walter Salles, her compatriot. They even presented their 8th co-production, *Tough times in Sao Paulo*, in the official selection of the Cannes Festival.
- ▶ **Apichatpong Weerasethakul** directed his first fiction, *Blissfully yours*, in 2002. Selected for the Cannes Festival, he obtained the Prize for the Best Film in the “Un certain regard” section. In 2004, *Tropical malady*, centered on the homosexual relationship of a soldier and his lover, was officially selected for the Cannes Festival: the film obtained the Jury Prize. In 2006, he returned to the making of documentaries with a self-portrait, *Syndromes and a Century*, centered on his childhood memories as the son of two countryside doctors.

DEVELOPMENT



© Idrissa Ouédraogo : La Mangue

Poverty is a key factor that undercuts the realisation of the full potential of the human being and societies. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides a vision of the world in which everyone – regardless of who they are and where they live – has equal opportunity to grow and develop in freedom and equality and to the fullness of their potential. It also makes clear our responsibility to help other people and nations, through individual and joint actions, and to create a social and international order that enables the enjoyment of all human rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social. So, in 2000 world leaders committed themselves to making 'the right to development a reality' and achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 in order to bring a better life to the poverty-affected people of the world. This global agreement acknowledges that individuals and societies can only develop fully through concerted national and international efforts.

DIRECTORS' AND ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES :

- ▶ **Sergei Bodrov** was born on June 28, 1948 in Khabarovsk (Russia). He studied at the Federal Institute of State of the Cinema (VGIK) in 1971 to become a scriptwriter. He then turned to journalism and became a special correspondent, while writing many scenarios. Having started as a film director in 1984, he became famous in 1996 with *The Caucasus Prisoner* which obtained the Nika Film Prize in 1999 and was nominated for an Oscar and a Golden Globe (Best Foreign Film).
- ▶ **Murali Nair** was born in Kerala (India) in 1966 and lives in Hyderabad. He started working in the cinema in Bombay. He directed his first short-film, *Tragedy of an Indian Farmer*, in 1993 and obtained the Golden Camera in 1999 with *Throne of Death*, his first long feature film. He directed *A Dog's Day* in 2001. His film entitled *Arimpara* was selected for the "Un Certain Regard" category at the 2003 Cannes Festival.
- ▶ **Idrissa Ouédraogo** directed *Yam daabo (The Choice)*, his first long feature film, in 1986. *Yaaba* (title not translated) came out in 1988 and obtained both the Critic's Choice at the Cannes Festival and the Public's Choice Award at the FESPACO (Pan African Film and TV Festival of Ouagadougou) the same year, i.e. in 1989. In 1990, he directed *Tilai* (title not translated) which obtained the Grand Prix at the 1990 Cannes Festival, then *Stallion of Yennenga* in 1991 (Jury Prize at the FESPACO). The same year, he directed a play by Aimé Césaire, *The tragedy of King Christophe*, at the Comédie-Française. He later participated in the collective memorial film *11'09"01 – September 11*, in 2002.

DIGNITY & JUSTICE

Dignity and justice for each and every human being is the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The concept of dignity lies at the heart of human rights. It is mentioned in the first sentence of the Preamble to the Declaration and appears again in Article 1. Yet of all the rights to which everyone is entitled, dignity is perhaps the most difficult to express and to put into a tangible form. Put simply, it means we must treat each other with respect, tolerance and understanding. Governments must do the same, in law as well as in practice, for the individuals who make up communities, societies and nations. The idea of justice and the equality of everyone before the law, appears throughout the Declaration. In fact the Declaration's core values of non-discrimination and equality are ultimately a commitment to universal justice and recognition of inherent human dignity.



© Shira Geffen & Etgar Keret : *What About Me?*

DIRECTORS' AND ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES :

- ▶ **Shira Geffen & Etgar Keret** Thanks to her directing and script-writing, Shira Geffen had already secured her position in contemporary Israeli culture. Independent and creative, she was already widely known for her children's books and her high quality theatrical activity. Worldwide recognition came in 2007 with *The Jellyfish*, for which she wrote the script, and directed in partnership with her husband, novelist Etgar Keret. *The Jellyfish* obtained the Prize awarded by the French Société des auteurs compositeurs dramatiques (The French Society of Writers of Fiction) and Drama and, above all, the Golden Camera at the Cannes Festival.
- ▶ **Runa Islam** studies the image and its narrative structure through a very complex, melancholy work anchored in a rigorous cinematic practice. Her installation entitled *Tuin*, 1998, is based on a scene from *Martha*, the film by Fassbinder. She pays tribute to Michelangelo Antonioni with *Dead Time*, 2000. *Be the first to see what you see as you see it*, 2004 was presented at the 51st Venice Biennale.
- ▶ **Bram Schouw** was born in The Hague (NL) in 1979. His short-film, *Marriage*, opened the Curta cinema Festival in Rio de Janeiro and was also shown in other international festivals. In 2007 he directed the play *Backspace* for the festival Cinema and Justice organised by the French embassy. One of his first projects, the international commercial for *Dance* 4 *Life*, won the prestigious trophy for the best commercial on HIV delivered by the European Commission.
- ▶ **Abderrahmane Sissako**, after having spent his childhood in Mauritania, was trained at the Federal State Institute for the Cinema in Moscow. There he shot his first short-films, including *October*, which ran at the Cannes Festival in 1993 in the section "Un certain regard". After having directed *Life on Earth* (1998), he returned to the Croisette in Cannes in 2002 for *Waiting for Happiness*, winner of the International Critic's Choice Award. North/South relationships are once again discussed in 2006 with *Bamako*, a humanist fable shown in Cannes as an Official Selection Outside Competition.
- ▶ **Pablo Trapero** In 1999, *Monde Grua* (title not translated), his first long-feature film described in a documentary-like style the difficult daily life of the Argentinean working-class. In 2002, Pablo Trapero directed the thriller *El Bonaerense* (title not translated), selected at Cannes in the section "Un certain Regard". Embodying the New Wave of the Argentinean Cinema, along with Diego Lerman and Lucrecia Martel, he submitted his third long-feature, a road-movie entitled *Rolling Family* (2004), before leaving for Patagonia where he directed *Born and Bred*, the portrait of a man ridden with guilt.



© Jia Zhang-Ke : *Black Breakfast*

ENVIRONMENT

The environment is never specifically mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, yet if you deliberately dump toxic waste in someone's community or disproportionately exploit their natural resources without adequate consultation and compensation, clearly you are abusing their rights. Over the past 60 years, as our recognition of environmental degradation has grown so has our understanding that changes in the environment can have a significant impact on our ability to enjoy our human rights. In no other area is it so clear that the actions of nations, communities, businesses and individuals can so dramatically affect the rights of others - because damaging the environment can damage the rights of people, near and far, to a secure and healthy life.

DIRECTORS' AND ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES :

- **Jia Zhang-Ke**, published his first novel in 1991 when an art student at the Art School of Taiyuan. He then was admitted to the Cinema University of Beijing where he set up an 'experimental film group', considered as the first independent film-making unit in China. Part of the sixth generation Chinese 'underground' film-makers, he has won a number of prizes at international film festivals. In 2006, Zhangke obtained the Golden Lion for *Still Life* at the 63rd Venice Mostra. In 2008 he presented his latest film, *24 City*, at the Cannes Festival.
- **Pipilotti Rist** was born in 1962. As the producer, director, and often protagonist of her videos, she situates herself as being post-Nam June Paik and Andy Warhol while being in their wake. She also endeavours to develop contemporary issues such as gender differences, the erogenous body and the feminine identity. Her work has been displayed in several exhibitions. Her last audio-visual installation entitled *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* is currently seen at the San Stae church as part of the Swiss participation in the 51st Venice Biennale.
- **Francesco Jodice** started his artistic career in 1995. In 2000, he co-founded "Multiplicity", an international network of artists and architects. Jodice meanwhile carried on with personal work such as *The secret Traces*, an experimentation based on the photographic shadowing of unknown people in various towns all over the globe or 100 stories, 100 short photographic portraits of persons unaware that they were being spied on while performing meaningless gestures. In 2003, he directed a short movie, *The Gift*, with his brother Sebastiano Jodice.
- **Sarkis** was born in Istanbul (Turkey) in 1938; he immigrated to France in 1962. His work was honoured by the prize for Painting at the Paris Biennale in 1967. Sarkis's works are acknowledged and exhibited all over the world, in the USA, Germany, Canada, Australia, China, Japan, Mexico and Brazil... In 2007, Sarkis was invited by the Louvre museum for the celebration of the Year of Armenia in France. In the form of installations, his project reflects his concern for space and time.



© Saman Salour : *The Final Match*

GENDER

At conception we all start life as equals, but at birth we are immediately treated differently based on whether we are a boy or a girl. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights acknowledges that men and women are not the same but insists on their right to be equal before the law and treated without discrimination. Gender equality is not a 'women's issue' but refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, girls and boys, and should concern and fully engage men as well as women. However, after 60 years, it is clear that it is the human rights of women that we see most widely ignored around the world, from female infanticide, sexual slavery and rape as an act of war, to exclusion from education, health and the right to compete equally for jobs. The right to be free of discrimination on the grounds of sex is specifically embodied in Article 2 of the declaration, but even a cursory reading of all 30 Articles is enough to remind us that in much of the world, the Declaration has yet to fulfill its promise to women.

DIRECTORS' AND ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES :

► **Armagan Ballantyne** was born in Wellington in 1972, and now lives in Titirangi. She studied directing at the FAMU in Prague and took a Master's degree in directing at the AFTRS of Sydney. Her short-films were shown in numerous international film festivals, including Venice, New York, Telluride and London. In 2006 Armagan joined the Sundance laboratory of directors in order to work on her first long-feature film, *The Strength of Water*, which is now in the phase of postproduction.

► **Saman Salour** was born in 1976. He obtained a degree from the Soureh School of Cinema in Teheran. He started his career as director of the Iranian Young Cinema Society. He was first assistant director for three long-feature films, and then directed short films and documentaries for the television. Saman Salour won several prizes at international festivals

for his last two long-feature films. In 2008, his film entitled *Lonely Tune of Tehran* was selected for the Directors' Fortnight.

► **Teresa Serrano** was born in 1936 in Mexico City D.F. ; she lives alternately in New-York and in Mexico City. With her videos, installations and sculptures, she both re-stages and deconstructs the notions of gender, race and stereotypes. *A Room of Her Own* for instance is a black and white video on obsession.



PARTICIPATION

© Charles de Meaux : Garish Sun

Wherever we live and in whatever sort of society, one of our basic rights is to be allowed to take a full part in the life of our community. Without participation we cannot experience and enjoy the wide range of rights and freedoms that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights seeks to guarantee. Our participation should be active, free and meaningful. Our views to improve our lives and our community should be heard and answered. We can have a say in the decisions of our local community and in national affairs. Article 21 explicitly says everyone has the right to take part in elections and government. Crucially, participation also means that the voices of people who are often excluded should be heard and heeded, especially when we are marginalised or discriminated against because of our disability, race, religion, gender, descent, age or on other grounds. We should be in a position to influence our own destiny and take part in decisions affecting us.

DIRECTORS' AND ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES :

► **Hany Abu-Assad** was born on October 11, 1961. He is a Dutch-Palestinian director who immigrated to the Netherlands in 1980. Along with his elder, Elia Suleiman, is among the important contemporary directors in Palestine. His most famous and most controversial film is *Paradise Now*. In 1998, he directed his first film, *Het 14de kippetje (The Fourteenth Chick)*, from the script by writer Arnon Grünberg. He then directed short films: *Nazareth 2000 (2000)* and *Rana's wedding (2002)*.

► **Charles de Meaux**, born in Istanbul (Turkey) in 1969, now lives alternately in Paris and Bangkok. Cofounder of Anna Sanders Films, the Production Company, Charles de Meaux directed his first film, *Le Pont du trieur*

(untranslated title), in 2000. Three years later, he went to Central Asia for the shooting of *Shimkent Hotel* with Melvil Poupaud, Romain Duris and Caroline Ducey.

► **Jasmila Zbanic**, was born in Sarajevo in 1974. She obtained a degree in theatre and directing from the Performing Arts Academy in the town of her birth. She was a puppeteer at the Bread and Puppet theatre in Vermont and a clown for a Lee De Long workshop. She started directing films in 1997, creating « *Deblokada* », an association of artists thanks to which she produced, wrote and directed several documentaries, videos and short films. Her work has been seen at festivals and exhibitions all over the world.

Stories on Human Rights

by Filmmakers, Artists and Writers

SCREENINGS

SELECTION OF SHORT-MOVIES OF STORIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

11-13 September, Krakow : Film Forum of the Council of Europe

7-8 October, Bruxelles : Conference European Union/United Nations on the 60th anniversary of the UDHR and the Declaration of Human Rights Defenders

16-24 October, Beirut : Cinema Days of Beirut

18-24 October, Tokyo : 21st International Film Festival : selection of 11 short movies and invitation to the filmmaker Francesco Jodice

10-11 November, Lisbon : within the Lisbon Forum at Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

11 November, Geneva : Open Doors day of the UN headquarter

15-17 November, Strasbourg : Development Days

24 November, London : selection at "We the peoples Film Festival"

28 November, Rome : opening of N[ever]land, Casa del Cinema, Villa Borghese

WORLD PREMIERE

13 November, Sao Paulo : The regional office of the SESC with the Ministry of Culture will organize in Sao Paulo a first special event with screening of the long-feature film. The filmmakers Daniela Thomas, Walter Salles and Pablo Trapero will be present. This event will be followed by other screenings and events throughout the country, in collaboration with TV SESC and TV Cultura.

SCREENINGS OF THE LONG-FEATURE FILM

The event : on December 10th, 2008, 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. *Stories on Human Rights* will be screened at Théâtre national de Chaillot as well as:

New York : North American premiere during a special session of the United Nations' General Assembly. The book will also be presented.

Geneva : presentation of the project in the frame of the International Film Festival of Human Rights

Amsterdam : screening at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs together with Dutch Amnesty International

Istanbul : screening for the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the UDHR organised by the International Independent film Festival.

Berlin : Screening organised by Amnesty International Germany and Friederich Ebert Stiftung Foundation

Milan : Giant screening at Piazza del Duomo, with the support of the City Authorities of Milan

THE BOOK

INTERVIEWS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND ANTHOLOGY OF TEXTS



© Murali Nair : The Crossing

Thanks to the collaboration with ELECTA Editors, the long-feature film is complemented by a book in order to fully celebrate the universal character of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The six themes of the Declaration (Culture, Development, Dignity and Justice, Environment, Gender and Participation) inspired the 12 writers from five continents, some of whom Nobel Prize winners who contributed to the book. This book is divided into six chapters, one for each theme, and comprises :

- the interviews with the directors and artists who took part in the project ;
- photographs of the various short-films and making of ;
- some excerpts of literary works.

12 writers brought their contribution and literary backing to this project, namely Naguib Mahfouz and Gabriel García Márquez for the section dedicated to “Culture” ; Ngozi Adichie Chimamanda and Elfriede Jelinek for the “Dignity and Justice” section ; Mo Yan and Assia Djebar for the section dedicated to “gender” ; Toni Morrison and Nuruddin Farah for “participation” ; Khaled Hosseini and Roberto Saviano for the theme of “development” ; Ruth Ozeki and José Saramago for “environment”.

The aim of this book is to extend the discussion on the historical impact and the values of the Universal Declaration and to raise awareness of the question of Human Rights in readers all over the world through these varied artistic expressions.

Contributions of 12 international writers :

► **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**, born in 1977 in Nigeria, left for the USA where she completed her studies in Communication and Political Science. Her short-stories have been selected several times for prestigious literary prizes both in the USA and GB. She now lives alternately in Kenya and the USA.

Book selected :

Half of a yellow sun (2006)

► **Assia Djebar**, was born in Cherchell in 1936. An Algerian writer writing in French, she is the author of novels, short-stories, poetry and essays, she has also written for the theatre, and directed several films. She was elected to the Académie française in 2005, thus becoming the first French-speaking Arabic writer to obtain this honour.

Book selected :

Women of Algiers in their apartment (1980)

► **Nuruddin Farah** was born in Somalia in 1945. A writer committed to the fight for women's rights, he has essentially been a critical witness of Somalia's fall into chaos. As a political refugee from 1972 onwards, he has alternately lived in England and South Africa. He has also won many literary distinctions including the prestigious prix Neustadt (1998).

Book selected :

Knots (2007)

► **Gabriel García Márquez** was born in 1927. He is a Columbian writer who won the Nobel prize for literature in 1982. A journalist, a political activist and a writer, he is now considered along with Jorge Luis Borges, as the father of magic realism. Filled with caustic humour, his novels and short-stories summon the great moments of South-American history seen through the prism of Spanish-American fable, folklore and mythology.

Book selected :

One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967)

► **Khaled Hosseini**, was born in Kabul in 1965. He is an American writer of Afghan origin who has settled in California. As the son of a diplomat, Khaled Hosseini followed the postings of his family, first in Iran (1970), before coming back to Kabul in 1973, then Paris in 1976. In 1980, rather than going back to their home-country, then occupied by the Soviets since 1979, the Hosseinis obtained political asylum in the USA.

Book selected :

A Thousand Splendid Suns (2007)

► **Elfriede Jelinek**, born in 1946 in Mürzzuschlag in Styria, is an Austrian novel and drama writer. A very successful, even scandalous writer, she is considered the most important German-language writer of her generation. The Piano Teacher, her seventh novel, has been translated into many languages and successfully adapted for the screen. In October 2004, she was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.

Book selected :

Bambiland (2004)

► **Naguib Mahfouz**, was born at Khân al-Khalili, in Cairo, in 1911 and died in 2006. He was a contemporary Egyptian writer of Arabic, and the most famous intellectual in Egypt, the winner of the Nobel prize for literature in 1988.

Book selected :

Karnak Café (1974)

► **Toni Morrison**, was born in Lorain (Ohio, USA) in 1931. A writer and professor of literature as well as an American editor, she won the Nobel prize for literature in 1993. Her novels depict the misery of the Black people in the USA since the beginning of the XXth century and attempt to reconstitute, fragment after fragment, its vivid, dense and complex memory.

Book selected :

The Bluest Eye (1970)

► **Ruth Ozeki** was born in New Haven (Connecticut, USA). *My year of meats* is a very effective novel on cultural differences and the troubles derived from them, with a background of commercial and ecological concerns.

Book selected :

My year of meats (1997)

► **José Saramago**, was born in Azinhaga (Portugal) in 1922. A Portuguese writer and journalist, he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1998.

Several of his works introduce the reconstruction of historical events, underlying the human factor of these events rather than the official historical version.

Book selected :

The Stone Raft (1986)

► **Roberto Saviano**, was born in Naples (Italy) in 1979. He is a contemporary writer and journalist famous for having depicted the Mafiosi circles in his works with great accuracy, especially that of the Neapolitan Camorra, revealing both its economic and governmental organizations.

Book selected :

Gomorra (2006)

► **Mo Yan**, was born in Gaomi, in Shandong Province, in 1956. He is a Chinese writer, today one of the most famous writers both in China and abroad. His very personal style is characterized by a very free treatment of themes such as sex, power and politics, and depicts frankly the psychological and physical meanders of today's China.

Book selected :

Big Breasts and Wide Hips (2004)

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS : HISTORY

The Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, consists of a preamble and 30 articles, setting out a broad range of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which all men and women, everywhere in the world, are entitled, without any distinction.

The Declaration was drafted by representatives of all regions and legal traditions. It has over time been accepted as a contract between governments and their peoples. Virtually all states have accepted it. The Declaration has also served as the foundation for an expanding system of human rights protection that today focuses also on vulnerable groups such as disabled persons, indigenous peoples and migrant workers.

The UDHR was adopted on 10 December 1948. The date has since served to mark Human Rights Day worldwide.

Many things can be said about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It is the foundation of international human rights law, the first universal statement on the basic principles of inalienable human rights, and a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. As the UDHR approaches its 60th birthday, it is timely to emphasize the living document's enduring relevance, its universality, and that it has everything to do with all of us. Today, the UDHR is more relevant than ever.

It was the UDHR, almost 60 years ago, that first recognized what have become nowadays universal values: human rights are inherent to all and the concern of the whole of the international community. Drafted by representatives of all regions and legal traditions, the UDHR has stood the test of time and resisted attacks based on "relativism". The Declaration and its core values, including non-discrimination, equality, fairness and universality, apply to everyone, everywhere and always. The UDHR belongs to all of us. More than ever, in a world threatened by racial, economic and religious divides, we must defend and proclaim the universal principles - first enshrined in the UDHR - of justice, fairness and equality that people across all boundaries hold so deeply.

Human rights are not only a common inheritance of universal values that transcend cultures and traditions, but are quintessentially local values and nationally-owned commitments grounded in international treaties and national constitutions and laws.

The Declaration represents a contract between governments and their peoples, who have a right to demand that this document be respected. Not all governments have become parties to all human rights treaties. All countries, however, have accepted the UDHR. The Declaration continues to affirm the inherent human dignity and worth of every person in the world, without distinction of any kind.

Stories on Human Rights

by Filmmakers, Artists and Writers

HUMAN RIGHTS TODAY

The UDHR protects all of us, and it also enshrines the gamut of human rights. The drafters of the UDHR saw a future of freedom from fear, but also of freedom from want. They put all human rights on an equal footing and confirmed human rights are all essential to a life of dignity.

The UDHR drafters' vision has inspired many human rights defenders who have struggled over the last six decades to make that vision a reality. The contemporary international human rights edifice that originates in the UDHR is to be celebrated. But it has yet to benefit all of humanity equally.

The struggle is far from over. As the Declaration's custodians and beneficiaries, all of us must reclaim the UDHR, make it our own, and it has to do with both our rights and our responsibilities. While we are entitled to our human rights, we should also respect the human rights of others and help make universal human rights a reality for all of us. In our efforts lies the power of the UDHR: it is a living document that will continue to inspire generations to come.

The UDHR belongs to all of us. No matter where you live, how much money you have, what faith you practice or political views you hold, all the human rights in the UDHR apply to you and have everything to do with you. It was the UDHR, almost 60 years ago, which first established what have become universal values: that human rights are inherent to all and the concern of the whole of the international community. Human rights are everyone's business.

The impressive international human rights edifice the UDHR has made possible is to be celebrated. But it has yet to benefit all of humanity equally. All of us, as rights-owners, must reclaim the UDHR, make it our own. While Governments bear the primary duty to promote and protect all human rights, non-state actors, other duty bearers and all of us also play an important role in making the universal enjoyment of human rights a reality. It is through concerted efforts of the United Nations system, its international and local partners, national ownership, and the participation of people from different corners of the world that we can truly envisage "dignity and justice for all of us".

PRODUCTION

ART FOR THE WORLD

ART for The World is a Non Governmental Organization associated with the UNDP; it is based in Geneva and since 2005 collaborates with its twin association ART for The World Europa based in Milan. In 1995, Adelina von Fürstenberg founded ART for The World within Dialogues de Paix (Dialogues of Peace), an international contemporary art exhibition which she curated on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. ART for The World is inspired by the article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims creative activity as an essential part of people's well-being, and pluralism and respect of differences in this context are essential conditions: "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts..."

ART for The World tries to spread our common cultural heritage and to promote, through art, that mutual respect which is necessary for the diffusion of the principles of Human Rights.

These are the main goals ART for The World aims to achieve organising international cultural events with the participation of artists, directors, musicians and writers from all over the world which express their thoughts on the most relevant issue of our recent times. All of this belongs to a more general context, as these activities go beyond the common boundaries of the culture giving different audiences the opportunity to meet through the universal dimension of art.

ART for The World may be considered as an itinerant museum: its activities are not related to a permanent and defined space, but to the sense of the initiatives it promotes. Hence, ART for The World is a link between diffusion of contemporary art and culture and the defence of universal rights and values. ART for The World is the only NGO organising project in the field of contemporary art. It is a unique and extreme experience in the international scene.

For its activities, ART for The World need a "light structure", a small permanent staff, a board of counsellors and collaborators in different cities around the world (Boston, Chicago, New York, Paris, London, Bruxelles, Milan, Turin, Florence, Athens, Sao Paulo, New Dehli) able to act rapidly and effectively. ART for The World works thanks to the contributions of its donors – public and private institutions and individual members – supporting each time the different projects.

ART for The World presents its projects in sites, which normally do not belong to the traditional contemporary art circuit, such as ancient monuments, monasteries, public buildings, schools, islands, parks, stadium and other open spaces. Well known and young artists from all continents are invited to participate both because of the great quality of their works and their moral and civil commitment to themes related to humanity.

For more information on the activities of ART for The World from 1996 to 2008: www.artfortheworld.net

Stories on Human Rights

by Filmmakers, Artists and Writers

Each year, the “European Council Cultural Event” label shall reward a small number of exceptional and innovative artistic projects which, organised in Europe, convey strong messages in keeping with the Ideals of the European Council and questions deemed crucial for European societies



PARTNERS



UNITED NATIONS



OFFICE FOR THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES ET EUROPÉENNES



THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights which is part of the United Nations Secretariat, has been given a unique mandate by the international community to promote and protect all human rights. Headquartered in Geneva, the Office is also present in some 50 countries. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, a position established by the General Assembly in 1993 to spearhead the United Nations' human rights efforts, takes action to safeguard and advocate for international human rights law. “Stories on Human Rights” is an initiative of the High Commissioner's Office which provided guidance to ensure that the information conveyed by the films and the publication reflect internationally agreed human rights norms and standards.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

As an integral part of its long-term strategy to promote human rights, the European Commission has cooperated with the OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) and UNRIC (UN Regional Information Office for Western Europe, Brussels), on the "Stories on human rights" project to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). These films are an effective communication tool worldwide for the promotion of six human rights related thematic fields based on the UDHR, notably dignity and justice, gender, culture, development, participation and development.

THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

In the context of doubts concerning the universal application of Human Rights, and at a moment when France occupied the presidency of the European Union, it was essential that the French Foreign Office reiterate the indivisibility of these rights and promote the indispensable awareness of the fragility of gains made in this area by participating in the cinematographic and literary project initiated by ART for The World. The reality of human suffering is to know no borders. The Declaration of 1948 is universal because the human is universal and because the same dignity is a right everywhere. It is this respect within diversity that is expressed by *Stories on Human Rights*, a creation by activist-artists from the world over intent on carrying the values of a universal language to all publics. It was for this that France supports this initiative.

THE SESC

The Social Service of Commerce (SESC), in São Paulo, has a strong reputation for cultural activities in Brazil. Non-profit, private organization, SESC aims to promote social welfare, and improve the quality of life and cultural development, running a TV and network of 29 active units, comprising sport centers, movie theatres, medical centers. Thanks to the inspiration and enthusiasm of Prof. Danilo Santos de Miranda, Director of the Regional Department of the State of São Paulo, and the common strive to promote art linked to ethical and social concerns, for over ten years SESC and ART for The World have been partners in several projects, whose last is STORIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS. Not only SESC has contributed to the project as financial partner, but it has produced the short film *CEVoyage*, written by the Brazilian filmmakers Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, who has also directed the film. Thanks to exchanges undertaken with other countries, as well as the compelling, innovative and prospective nature of its projects, the reputation of this original organization extends well beyond Brazilian borders. SESC is actively participating to the circulation, distribution and promotion of STORIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS, in Brazil, in South America and in Portuguese speaking countries such as, among others, Angola, Mozambique and Timor East.