ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY

ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY IS A GROUP OF ARTISTS COMMITTED TO PREVENTING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, SAVING LIVES AND PROMOTING A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS.

# MONTHLY BULLETIN

APRIL 2004

**Welcome to the *Artists for Amnesty Monthly Bulletin*, which will keep you informed on critical human rights issues, cases of individuals at risk, and the life-saving work of Amnesty International. Our Monthly Bulletin will also highlight the efforts of artists on behalf of human rights.**

## STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN LAUNCH EVENT

From left to right, **ESAI MORALES, SAMANTHA MATHIS, SHIVA ROSE-McDERMOTT,** and **MIRA SORVINO.**

Artists for Amnesty hosted the launch of the Stop Violence Against Women Campaign on March 9 at Creative Artists Agency in Beverly Hills. The highlighted countries included the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia and Juarez, Mexico.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the artists and speakers who participated in the event: **MIRA SORVINO, SHIVA ROSE-McDERMOTT, SAMANTHA MATHIS, ESAI MORALES, ALICIA PARTNOY, SAMER RABADI, HELEN HOWE** and **EMMA FRIEDLAND.**

Amnesty International's two year campaign will focus on violence against women around the world, especially in the family and the use of rape as a tool of armed conflict.

The report, "It's in our hands. Stop violence against women." is now available. For a copy of the report or country specific actions, please call Artists for Amnesty at 310.815.0450.

Former Prisoner of Conscience **ALICIA PARTNOY** speaks at the launch event at CAA.

## CUBA

On April 1, Artists for Amnesty, in conjunction with the City of West Hollywood, held the opening reception for **CABILDO IS COMING: A Celebration of Cuban Art and Culture** at the A + D Museum in West Hollywood. The art exhibition was curated by **EDGAR CETINA**. The event marked the one year anniversary of the massive crackdown on political dissent by the Cuban government, which resulted in the arrest of over 70 Prisoners of Conscience serving sentences between 5 and 28 years for the non-violent expression of their beliefs. The count now stands at 88, as more individuals have been silenced by the repressive policies of the Cuban authorities. Amnesty International continues to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all the Prisoners of Conscience in Cuba.

**The Cabildo is Coming** by **VIREDO**

The art was on display from April 1-5 at the A + D Museum, and featured Cuban artists: **VIREDO, LAZARO AMARAL, MANOLO NUÑEZ, CARLOS ULLOA, EDUARDO ESTRADA, WILFREDO LAM, EDUARDO FUNES, HAYDEE, SAHARA,** and **MICHAEL SCULL, BELKIS CUZA MALE** and others.

**FERNANDO MARQUET**, former Cuban political prisoner, speaking at opening night.

Left to right, artists **EDUARDO ESTRADA, VIREDO, MANOLO NUÑEZ,** and **LAZARO AMARAL.**

The exhibition also included the showing of **THE PRESIDIO: The Trip Back** (Special Edition), a documentary about Cuba's prisons directed by **RAFAEL LIMA** and produced by **DAVID ERNSBERGER. CANDY SOSA** generously provided live music during the opening reception.

Artists for Amnesty would like to extend our special thanks to everyone who helped make the exhibition and opening reception possible.

Author **CAROLINA GARCIA-AGUILERA** in front of a quilt dedicated to Cuba's Prisoners of Conscience.

## ON THE FRONTLINES

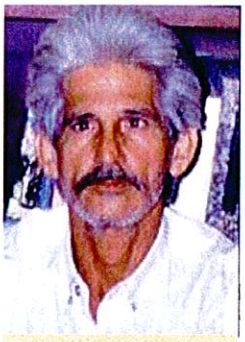
Artists for Amnesty would like to thank **ADRIEN BRODY** for narrating Amnesty's upcoming video on economic, social and cultural rights.

**OLIVER STONE** interviews Fidel Castro in his revealing new documentary **LOOKING FOR FIDEL** currently airing on **HBO**. He questions President Castro about the Prisoners of Conscience in Cuba and refers to Amnesty's 2002 Annual Report and the April 2003 Artists for Amnesty Bulletin. To learn more about the documentary visit:

**www.hbo.com/docs/programs/looking_fidel/index.html**

## GET UP, STAND UP

### ONE YEAR TOO MANY, CUBAN PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE REMAIN IN PRISON



**MANUEL VÁSQUEZ PORTAL,** one of 88 dissidents in prison in Cuba.

One year ago the Cuban government carried out a massive crack-down on opponents in which at least a hundred people were arrested. Many were subjected to manifestly unfair trials and sentenced to prison terms of between six and 28 years. Since the crackdown, 88 Prisoners of Conscience have been declared by AI.

Although three have not yet been tried, the others were convicted of activities such as publishing articles critical of economic, social or human rights issues in Cuba; involvement in unofficial groups considered by the authorities as counter-revolutionary; or having contacts with individuals viewed as hostile to Cuba's interests.

The Cuban authorities justified the crackdown on dissidents as a necessary response to US aggression towards the country. Cuba's laws provide stiff prison terms for those deemed guilty of supporting US policy against Cuba.

AI is concerned that most of the Prisoners of Conscience have been deliberately incarcerated in prisons far from their homes and families and some have reportedly been held in solitary confinement for extended periods as a form of punishment for their political activities. There have also been some allegations of ill-treatment by prison guards or by other prisoners, reportedly with the complicity of prison guards. When Víctor Rolando Arroyo Carmona complained about ill-treatment, he was reportedly dragged to the floor by three prison guards and beaten on the face and body. Guards allegedly trapped his leg in a door to immobilize him during the beating.

In some cases, relatives of prisoners have reportedly been harassed by the authorities, due to their own dissident activities or their efforts on behalf of imprisoned family members. Such harassment has reportedly taken the form of threats, summonses, interrogations and curtailment of access to prisoners.

### TAKE ACTION

**Please write,** calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience in Cuba, including those arrested in the crack-down of one year ago. Pending their release, call for the authorities to provide prisoners with adequate medical care and treatment whenever necessary.

**Su Excelencia**
**Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz**
**Presidente de los Consejos de Estado y de Ministros**
**La Habana**
**Cuba**

**FAX: 011 537 333 085**

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

### EXPOSE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL—WEST HOLLYWOOD MAY 12-17, 2004

EXPOSE

On May 12, Amnesty International will kick-off its third annual film festival at the Directors Guild of America with the premiere of director **HECTOR BABENCO**'s film ***CARANDIRU***. Based on a true story, *Carandiru* explores the cells, psyches and horrors of Latin America's largest prison, culminating in the fateful 1992 massacre of 111 inmates during a prison riot. Through the eyes of a doctor, who for 12 years treated inmates suffering from a variety of diseases in decaying facilities, the viewer follows a montage of flashbacks and interlocking lives to portray the culture and the characters of an overcrowded and lawless prison. Ten years after the massacre, Carandiru was demolished to make way for a park. But while its demolition erased an emblem of police brutality in Brazil, Babenco's rendering is a monument to those whose spirits were lost within its walls. Hector Babenco will be presented with the Artists for Amnesty Award for his body of work reflecting a commitment to human rights and human dignity for his films: *Pixote, Kiss of the Spiderwoman, At Play in the Fields of the Lord, Ironweed,* and his latest work *Carandiru.*

The remainder of the festival will feature screenings at the Directors Guild, Pacific Design Center, Egyptian Theater, an d the UCLA James Bridges Theater. For festival details and tickets, please visit: **www.amnestyusa.org/filmfest/weho/2004/**

**To RSVP for the Opening Night, please call: 310.815.0450 ext. 107**

## SPINNING FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

Artists for Amnesty and Revolution Fitness invite you to help stop violence against women while getting in shape. **LET'S STOP SPINNING OUR WHEELS**, is a special spin event to raise funds for Amnesty International's Stop Violence Against Women campaign launched last month. Participants will spin, listen to inspiring stories of courage, as well as the harrowing struggle women face around the world to defend their human rights.

The event will be Friday, May 7 at 6:00pm at Revolution Fitness located at 1211 Montana Avenue, Santa Monica.
For information on how to participate please contact Cari Bjelajac at: cdb5@aol.com or call 310.815.0450. Per bike donation: $125.

JOIN ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY

**CONTACT: Bonnie Abaunza**
**Director, Artists for Amnesty**
**2999 Overland Avenue, Suite 111**
**Los Angeles, CA 90064**
**310.815.0450 babaunza@aiusa.org**
**http://www.amnestyusa.org/artistsforamnesty**

*AFA MONTHLY BULLETIN Edited by Bonnie Abaunza and Mario Tafur*