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

FEBRUARY 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.

ON THE FRONT LINES

JULIA STILES VISITS CHILDREN IN DETENTION

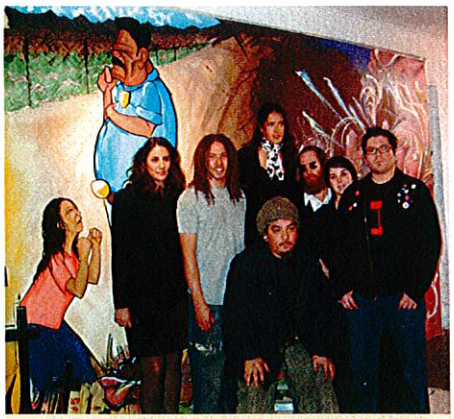
"When I read kids' accounts of being shackled, strip-searched, and verbally abused, I was shocked. Statistics are easy to dismiss, but children's testimonies aren't."

- JULIA STILES, *Marie Claire*

JULIA STILES recently visited the Berks County Youth Center in Leesport, Pennsylvania to see for herself the conditions in which unaccompanied minors are held in immigration detention. She was prompted to take the trip after reading Amnesty International's 2003 report on *Why Am I Here: Unaccompanied Children in Immigration Detention.* The report details how the number of unaccompanied child detainees in the United States has doubled in five years, from 2375 in 1997 to 5385 in 2001; 48 percent of facilities surveyed in the report admitted to housing immigrant children alongside juvenile offenders; and 57 percent of those facilities said that they use solitary confinement to discipline children. After reading these and other disturbing facts concerning the detention of children for immigration purposes, Julia Stiles, with the help of Amnesty International, visited detention facilities to meet with the children and hear their own accounts of their treatment. *Marie Claire* featured Julia Stiles' trip to immigration detention facilities in the January 2004 issue.

ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY AND SALMA HAYEK PROMOTE MURAL ON THE KILLINGS IN JUAREZ

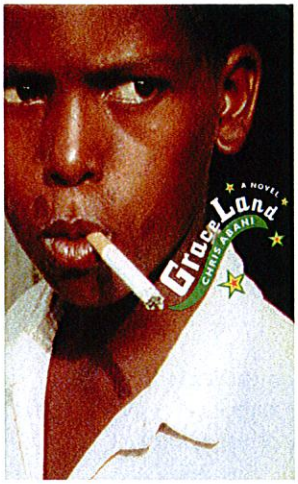
On January 26, Artists for Amnesty hosted an exhibition of a mural dedicated to the women of Ciudad Juárez at Headquarters Art Salon in Hollywood. The mural, which spans over 40 feet, is an on-going collaborative effort by four artists: **AXIS**, **EDER**, **JIAH**, and **KOFIE**. The mural is part of a larger exhibition, *Beyond Graffiti*, curated by **EDGAR CETINA** and **LEMUEL**, who also directors of Headquarters Art Salon. Over 378 bodies have now been discovered in Juárez, Mexico, with hundreds more women still missing. **SALMA HAYEK** visited Headquarters to meet with the artists and see the mural. Ms. Hayek was one of several artists who signed a letter prepared by V-Day and Amnesty International last April calling on President Vicente Fox to do more to stop the killings and bring the perpetrators to justice.



From left to right, Bonnie Abaunza, Jiah, Salma Hayek, Lemuel, Mrs. Beasely, Axis, and sitting in front, Eder at Headquarters.

Artists for Amnesty would like to extend a special thank you to Ms. Hayek for her continued support of Amnesty International and the women of Juárez.

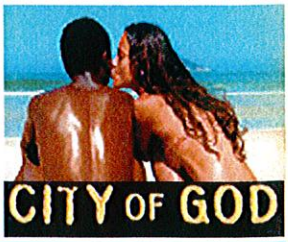
GRACELAND



Artists for Amnesty invites you to a reading by **CHRIS ABANI** of his debut novel *GRACELAND,* which chronicles the coming of age of a young man in Nigeria during the late 1970s and early 1980s (event details on reverse side). Chris Abani was arrested and imprisoned in 1985 for six months on suspicion of masterminding a political coup. It was suggested that the plot of his first novel, a thriller published two years earlier about the return of the Third Reich called *Masters of the Board,* had laid a blueprint for the coup. Chris was eighteen years old at the time. Over the next five years, he would be imprisoned twice more. Upon the publication of *Sirocco,* his second novel, he was accused of sedition and held for one year at Kiri Kiri, a maximum security prison in Lagos, Nigeria. He was then sentenced to death for his play *Song for a Broken Flute,* and spent eighteen months at Kiri Kiri—six of them in solitary confinement—until friends bribed prison officials to arrange for his escape. In 2001, Chris received the PEN USA West Freedom to Write Award and the Prince Claus Award. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in English literature at USC.

CELEBRATION OF ARTISTIC FREEDOM

Amnesty International, ACLU Foundation of Southern California, Lee Strasberg Institute, LA Weekly and the City of West Hollwyood are hosting an Oscar Viewing Dinner and Afterparty at AGO Restaurant on Sunday, February 29. Oscar-nominated director **FERNANDO MEIRELLES** will be awarded the **ARTIST OF CONSCIENCE AWARD** for his critically-acclaimed film **CITY OF GOD**. For information and tickets see reverse side.



GET UP, STAND UP

ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT IN ECUADOR AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLE LEADER

On 1 February, an assassination attempt was made on Leonidas Iza, the President of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, Confederacion de Nacionalidades Indigenas del Ecuador (CONAIE) in the capital Quito. He escaped unharmed, but four of his relatives, who were accompanying him at the time of the attack were injured. His 23 year-old son Javier was seriously hurt and his wife, Josefina Anguisaca, was hit on the face with a gun by one of the attackers.

Leonidas Iza had just arrived at the airport in Quito from Cuba, where he had taken part in a meeting against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). As he and his family were getting out of a taxi outside the CONAIE offices, two unknown individuals reportedly got out of their car and shouted "we are going to kill you" (Te vamos a matar) at Leonidas Iza. They then opened fire, forcing the family to seek cover in the CONAIE building. Despite this, bullets went through a metal door injuring Leonidas Iza's son Javier and two other relatives. President Lucio Gutierrez has condemned the attack and called for an investigation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

By the end of December 2003, Ecuador's indigenous alliance including the CONAIE, called for the resignation of President Lucio Gutierrez, due to his failure to fulfill his election manifesto.

The recent assassination attempt against Leonidas Iza took place in a context of threats and intimidation against indigenous and community leaders, who oppose government policies. In December 2003, indigenous leader Humberto Cholango was detained for a few hours by police officers following a critical statement he made against President Gutierrez.

Residents of Mindo and the environmental group Accion Ecologica take over tractors belonging to the OCP (Oleoducto de Crudos Pesados) Pipeline Consortium. (© El Universo)

In December, the Inter-American Commission ordered the Ecuadorian state to protect the indigenous community of Sarayacu after they received several death threats and was physically and verbally assaulted during a demonstration in the same month. The Sarayacu community opposes the concession given by the Ecuadorian state to oil companies to start extraction work in their territory.

TAKE ACTION

- expressing serious concern at the attempted killing of Leonardo Iza and his family;
- calling on the authorities to ensure their safety;
- noting that President Gutierrez has condemned the assassination attempt and ordered an investigation to be carried out;
- calling for the investigation to be full and independent, for the findings to be made public, and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

Send letters to:

Minister of the Interior:
Ing. Raul Baca Carbo
Ministro de Gobierno, Policia,
Justicia, Cultos y Municipalidades
Ministerio de Gobierno y Policia
Benalcazar y Espejo
Quito
ECUADOR

FAX: 011 593 2 2580 067

ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY SCARVES

SALMA HAYEK displays the scarf created by artist and Artists for Amnesty member **AME PITT** in honor of the murdered and disappeared women of Juárez. Artists for Amnesty is selling the scarves as an effort to raise awareness about the killings in Juárez, as well as to help fund Amnesty's upcoming international campaign to end violence against women. The scarf is imprinted with women's hands, representing the disappeared and murdered women of Juárez. For more information about the scarves email us at:

afa@aiusa.org or call **310.815.0450**

SPECIAL EVENTS

February 14: March in Solidarity with the women of Juárez.
Juárez, Mexico

February 24: Booksigning and Reading of "Graceland" by CHRIS ABANI.
Barnes & Noble, 10850 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, 7:30pm

February 29, 2004 Celebration of Artistic Freedom
Oscar night viewing dinner and after-party
AGO Restaurant, 5:00pm, For tickets call: 310.815.0450

SAVE THE DATE: March 9, Launch of Amnesty International's Campaign to End Violence Against Women.

JOIN ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY

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