

10 APRIL 2006

CREATE CHANGE

THE FABRIC OF HUMAN RIGHTS

By Joseph Richardson

Joe is an art student and member of UHC collective.

“I wanted to address Amnesty's work on torture and in particular the idea of protecting against torture by ‘upholding the physical integrity of the person’.

For me ‘human rights’ is not a static concept, but is constantly under construction by those who defend them. Rather than focusing on the loss of human rights, I was interested in expressing the beauty found in Amnesty's efforts to build them.

This piece is inspired by a passage I once read in Nelson Mandela's autobiography. In prison, his letters were censored by the authorities who cut out passages from them using razor blades. I believe that censoring communication with people in prison is a form of torture.

Each stitch in this knitted letter symbolizes the links made by Amnesty between its supporters. Together these individuals ‘construct the fabric’ of human rights.

Because the razor blades are held tight by the fabric stitches, they are no longer able to cut, and cannot damage the fabric or enlarge the holes. This mirrors the way Amnesty's members help prevent torture and abuse; effectively they hold back or suspend the weapons of torture.”

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“I fainted several times because of the severity of the beating. Once I fell when I fainted and found my head under the boot of a soldier who started beating me severely. I fainted again and woke only to find the soldier urinating on my head and back; he was roaring with laughter.”

– Jumah al-Dossari, July 2005, currently held at Guantánamo Bay naval base

Torture is never justifiable. It is cruel, inhuman and degrades us all. Show your support for people like Jumah al-Dossari. Join Amnesty International's campaign to stop torture now.

HANDS TIED

By Alice Horton

Alice is a Manchester-based freelance illustrator.

“The images I have created are my personal reaction to the horrifying lack of women’s rights in countries across the world.

As a woman, I am appalled that countries like Saudi Arabia have ranked lowest in a recent report on legal protection for domestic violence. My first image depicts a familiar household electrical flex used to restrain a woman’s hands.

This is a symbol both of domestic violence and the absence of justice for women who are victims of this crime.”

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“The man hits, abuses and shouts and the woman has no rights at all.”

– Laura Rebeca Lirrayes, Guatemala

Violence against women plagues communities the world over, crossing borders, cultures, religion and class. Help bring an end to this human rights scandal. Act now by joining Amnesty International’s campaign to Stop Violence Against Women.

A WOMAN'S PLACE

By Alice Horton

Alice is a Manchester-based freelance illustrator.

“The iron attached to the flex is another universally recognized object but I have used it as a symbol of oppression, of outdated laws that are used to allow men to control women, to prevent them from gaining equal rights. My interest is in presenting a simple image that can be instantly understood, transcending [ok?] cultural boundaries.”

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A UNIVERSAL RIGHT

By Alice Horton

Alice is a Manchester-based freelance illustrator.

“My final drawing is a depiction of hope: a woman who has not given up on her quest for justice. She is observant of her culture and tradition but demands to receive the same rights as a citizen that her father, husband and brothers enjoy. This is another universal image: the hands, no longer tied, are free to express the rights of all women.”

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END THE DEATH PENALTY

By Jai Redman

“This was my response to reading about countries who still carry out the death penalty.

I focused on Japan because the executions are carried out in secret.”

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Every day, prisoners – men, women, even children – face execution. Whatever their crime, and whether they are guilty or innocent, their lives are lost to a system of justice that values retribution over rehabilitation.

The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. It violates the right to life. It is irrevocable. Join Amnesty International and take action against the death penalty now.

NASAL DECONGESTANT

By Jai Redman

“This piece was inspired by my reaction to the so-called ‘war on terror’. It’s about what happens to language through (often self-imposed) social control in times of conflict. Confusing words like ‘security’ and ‘liberty’ serve to cloud our minds and reduce human rights around the world.”

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“... we will act boldly in freedom's cause.”

- US President George Bush, State of the Union Address, 31 January 2006

Arbitrary arrests, detentions and torture have all been invoked in the name of freedom and an end to “terror”. Don’t let the authorities use the “war on terror” as an excuse to throw out human rights. Join Amnesty International’s campaign to stop torture now.

PLACARDS

By Jai Redman

“These two placards were made as a response to Amnesty’s work on land rights issues. They are prototype models for a possible installation of up to 100 placards made with soil gleaned from land struggle sites.”

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In January 2005 a gang of cattle ranchers and foresters attacked the offices of lawyer Cliver Rocha in Bolivia. The intruders destroyed his files and threatened to burn him alive because of his work supporting the land claims of local indigenous communities. Across the world, ordinary women and men are standing up for human rights, speaking out against injustice, risking their lives to protect those who are harassed and abused for the non-violent expression of their beliefs or lifestyles. Take action now through Amnesty International and show your solidarity for their work.

HOW DO YOU BUILD HUMAN RIGHTS?

By Sam Sutton

Sam is a graphic designer working at UHC.

“The idea that captivated me most during the workshop was that human rights don't exist till we create them. I also wanted to demonstrate a positive way of looking at human rights. Out of this came the idea of posing the question (in Amnesty's four core languages): ‘How do you build human rights?’. One answer is in the text - images of Amnesty's human rights defenders; although it's not the full story.”

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Across the world, ordinary women and men are standing up for human rights, speaking out against injustice, risking their lives to protect those who are harassed and abused for the non-violent expression of their beliefs or lifestyles. These human rights defenders are no different from us. Their actions are what set them apart.

Take action through Amnesty International and show your solidarity for their work. Read their stories; share them with others.

UNTITLED

By Marcus Diamond

Marcus is a Visual Agent based somewhere north of Watford, UK. He works for anyone brave enough to commission him.

“I was primarily interested in the scale and vision of Amnesty's work around the globe. So I looked for common signs or visual aids to “hang” the concept on. For example, using parts of the human body or a hand motion to represent an idea.”

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With over 1.8 million supporters worldwide, Amnesty International campaigns for an end to human rights abuses everywhere. From street protests to email appeals, the actions and efforts of Amnesty International members continue to put pressure on offending governments worldwide. Local action really can have global impact. Join Amnesty International today.