**Freedom from Torture: Drawing the Line – a show of drawings**

**Dear Artist,**

**We are contacting you to ask if you would consider making and donating one or more line drawings which could address certain aspects of this charity’s work. An exhibition is planned for Millennium Gallery in St. Ives in November 2013. We are very grateful to Joseph Clarke for his generous support in allowing us to use this wonderful space. All the works will be for sale at the same price (probably £35 each), and we would like you to sign the works on the back, please. It is hoped that you will feel able to support this charity, and it is also hoped that line drawings will not represent too much of an investment of time or materials, but can still make a powerful statement, and provide a drawing to be treasured by the purchaser.**

**Drawings can be any size from 10cm square to 1m square (but they don’t have to be square!).**

**Here is some information about the charity and its work:**

The work began more than 25 years ago growing out of Amnesty International’s Medical Group. Volunteer health professionals campaigned against violations of human rights and documented evidence of torture. Operating at first from a hut in the yard of the Amnesty International office, the six founding members of Freedom from began documenting evidence of torture and campaigning against human rights violations.

The charity set out to provide:

* medical treatment,
* counselling and
* therapy and
* to document evidence of torture.

The organisation expanded through the 1980s and 1990s treating 2,000 clients in one year in the early 1990s. 111 Isledon Road, London is one of the few purpose-built treatment centres for torture survivors in the world - a place where torture survivors can have a real sense of care and calm.

Following the Government's dispersal policy implemented in the year 2000, FFT opened four centres across the UK. in London, Manchester, Newcastle and Glasgow and supports work with torture survivors around the country. Abroad it trains health professionals from places as diverse as Sri Lanka, Egypt, Kosovo, Brazil and Sudan.

‘Freedom from Torture’ helps when and where it can to heal the mental and physical damage to victims from over a hundred countries around the world. 9% of those helped by the charity are children, often arriving in the U.K. unaccompanied, having witnessed the torture and/or murder of their parents. There are some harrowing stories on the charity’s web-site (see below) and some striking examples of the difference the charity makes. Take Bacia, for example, from Sierra Leone. When soldiers came for her family, she fled with her father to the forest. They were soon found. Her father was ordered to rape her and refused. He was shot dead in front of her and she was forced at gunpoint to dance on his body. She suffered violent hallucinations and terrifying bouts of depression but, through attending the charity’s Young Women’s Group and meeting girls recovering from similar horrors she began to share her feelings and make friends. No-one can eradicate cruelty, brutality and sadism or undo the wrongs done but the resilience of the human spirit is astonishing.

Further information about the work of Freedom from Torture can be found at [www.freedomfromtorture.org](http://www.freedomfromtorture.org)

  **16 YEARS OF INVOLVEMENT WITH FREEDOM FROM TORTURE**

(previously Medical Foundation for Care of Victims of Torture).

FFT began in 1985 as the medical branch of Amnesty International. Since that time it has grown to a large organisation spanning 5 cities, and is almost entirely funded by donations (apart from a small amount of money from the Dept. of Health to fund production of guidelines for assessing Torture survivors, and training health professionals). This is important in order for the organisation to remain impartial and independent.

Since my family`s first practical involvement with FFT in 1997, we have time again seen the benefits and fantastic support offered to survivors of torture. We have met families who have been given allotments as part of the `Garden project`- where individuals who have lost everything are given a place from which to grow their own flowers/fruit and veg. and to start to make something positive to rebuild their lives. We have met folk who are part of the `Write To Life` project, who are encouraged to write stories/poems about their lives, which are then published annually by FFT. Art and Music projects are strong and provide regular sessions for self-expression in supportive and friendly environments with trained therapists.

All individuals arriving at FFT are offered assessment and documentation of their injuries, and then provided with expert help with both physical sequelae (physiotherapy etc), and psychological distress (psychotherapy). The long slow process to recovery may then begin. Documentation of injuries for the asylum courts is also a large part of the work. Help with housing and social welfare difficulties is freely available, as well as English lessons etc.

The Holiday Project has been the area in which we may help most. FFT tries to arrange for 50+ vulnerable families or individuals to have a week long holiday with host volunteers away from the city in which they live. This often results in long term contact with the survivors and becomes an additional support for them outside of the daily help FFT can provide. To see, for example two young teenage Iraqi Kurdish girls splashing in the waves at Sennen (fully covered of course) with a sense of joyous freedom… a delight to behold!

 Jane Martin

 If you feel able to help in any way please contact Kate Walters at kate.horse@tiscali.co.uk or call Kate on 07816 098807.

 Drawings can be delivered to Millennium or to Kate during the week preceding the show.

 **Thank you.**

**West Cornwall supporters Group.**