



Amnesty International Firefly Project

International Human Rights Day Artist Commission



Application Deadline: **Friday, August 4, 2006**

About the Commission

The concept of “human rights” refers to the minimum standard of legal, civil, and political freedoms guaranteed to all individuals regardless of nationality, ethnicity, and other localizing factors. The clear articulation of these rights in international political conventions and the ongoing discourse around their legislation and enforcement provide a global frame of reference and concrete starting point around which political action—artistic or otherwise—can be organized.

Amnesty International Firefly Project (AI Firefly) is a New York City-based collective of artists and activists affiliated with Amnesty International USA as local group #704. In an effort to support Amnesty International’s global advocacy and educational work and provide a forum for critically considering the intersection of the human rights framework and contemporary artistic practices, AI Firefly has announced a juried \$3,000 commission for the creation of a new art work to be presented on or around International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2006.

The objectives of the International Human Rights Day Commission are to (a) raise awareness of Amnesty International USA through the presentation of innovative, creative artwork in conjunction with other Amnesty International-sponsored International Human Rights Day programming; (b) generate new, creative, critical thinking about the intersection of contemporary artistic practices and the human rights framework; (c) encourage collaborations among artists and human rights and social justice organizations during the production and presentation of the selected project; and (d) raise awareness of specific human rights concerns via the presentation of the selected project.

AI Firefly will support its selected project throughout the production and presentation process from September to December 2006. In coordination with other Amnesty International groups in the New York City area, AI Firefly will work with the artist to produce related programming, such as artist talks and presentations to relevant community, activist, and arts groups, during and around International Human Rights Day on December 10, 2006.



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About Human Rights

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in response to the events of World War II. Its precepts have been encoded into legally-binding international treaties and are considered to provide a set of global moral norms that guide political behavior.

Amnesty International's advocacy focuses on two broad subsets of rights, referred to as "civil and political rights" and "economic, social, and cultural rights," as defined in the UDHR and other international treaties.

Civil and political rights concern the freedom of an individual to act as he or she pleases as long as that action does not infringe on the rights and freedoms of others (for example, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to a fair trial, and the right to be free from torture and arbitrary arrest).

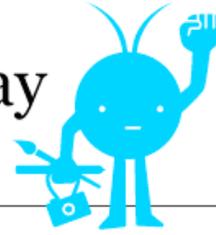
Economic, social, and cultural rights concern the conditions necessary to meet basic human needs such as food, shelter, education, health care, and gainful employment. Economic, social, and cultural rights include the right to education; adequate housing, food, and water; the highest attainable standard of health; the right to work and rights at work; as well as the cultural rights of minorities and indigenous peoples.

All human rights are defined as interdependent and integrally related—for example, an individual's ability to participate in government (considered a civil and political right) is directly affected by the right to express oneself and access to education (considered economic, social, and cultural rights).

The Amnesty International Firefly Project International Human Rights Day Commission will support work that substantially addresses one or several human rights priorities of Amnesty International.

For information about Amnesty International's human rights priorities, please refer to <http://www.amnesty.org/campaign>. If you have a question about the appropriateness of your project for the commission, you may contact AI Firefly staff via e-mail at commission@aifirefly.org.

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Eligibility Requirements

Applicants and projects must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Applicants must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States of America.
- Applications from individuals and collaborative artist groups are accepted; however, applications from incorporated organizations are not eligible.
- Applicants must be residing and working in the New York City tri-state area.
- Applicants must demonstrate a history of successful community collaborations. Outstanding emerging artists and arts groups with two-year professional history will also be considered.
- Applicant must propose a project that substantially addresses one of Amnesty International's global human rights priorities.
- Applicants must make a commitment to produce the project by December 2006 for public presentation on and after International Human Rights Day on December 10; the presentation could include full-scale production of a theatrical performance, launch of a new media or internet-based project, premiere screening of a film or video project, opening reception for a public art project, or similar presentation.
- Applicants are encouraged to propose innovative work that critically considers the relationship between contemporary artistic practices, including "activist" artistic practices, and human rights.

In addition, projects must abide by the following guidelines regarding appropriate use of funds:

- Funds must only be used for project-specific production expenses.
- The commission is for the creation of a new work or new component of an existing work. Projects that have completed the "development" or "pre-production" phase are eligible to apply, but projects that have completed "production" and seek distribution, outreach, or "finishing" funds are not eligible to apply.

Ineligible expenses include:

- General operating expenses
- Capital purchases, including the purchase of equipment
- Any expenses that cannot be documented with an invoice or receipt
- Artist fees payable to the applicant(s) exceeding \$500
- Additional artist fees exceeding \$500 (total artist fees may not exceed \$1,000)

Ineligible projects include:

- Projects with total budgets greater than \$20,000
- Projects intended solely for internal or promotional use

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Applicants may download the application form in Microsoft Word format at: <http://www.aifirefly.org/commission/applicationform.doc>. If you need an application form in another editable format, please contact AI Firefly for assistance.

Applicants are also required to submit work samples in the format described on the final page of the application form.

Completed applications must be submitted via e-mail to commission@aifirefly.org. Work samples may be submitted via e-mail or postal mail.

The application deadline is Friday, August 4, 2006. **Application forms AND work samples must be received—not postmarked—by Friday, August 4, 2006.**

Late applications will not be reviewed.

Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel composed of curators, presenters, artists, and human rights experts.

Evaluation of proposals will be based on the following review criteria:

- Relevance to Amnesty International's human rights priorities
- Quality and innovation of project concept
- Artistic merit and professional record
- Feasibility of proposed project
- Anticipated impact of proposed project

The panel will recommend up to three proposals. Amnesty International Firefly Project members will select one project for funding from the pool of recommended proposals, taking into consideration the resources of the collective. During the proposal review period, Amnesty International Firefly Project members may contact an applicant for a phone or an in-person interview to discuss the proposal.

Applicants will be notified of the status of their proposal by e-mail on September 1, 2006. Declined proposals may be referred to other potential sources of foundation and community funding.



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Production and Evaluation Process

The selected artist or group must execute an award agreement with AI Firefly that requires the artist to complete the proposed project according to the work plan and budget described in the proposal.

The artist will be required to submit progress reports to ensure that the project is being completed according to schedule. The artist will submit receipts and a payment release form to AI Firefly for monthly reimbursement, by check, up to the total amount of the commission.

AI Firefly and the artist will collaborate on a series of final programs around the exhibition/premiere of the project in early December to coincide with International Human Rights Day (on December 10). These programs may include screenings or performances, an artist talk or panel discussion, or other programs as determined by AI Firefly. AI Firefly will assume responsibility for producing and paying for these programs. One program may be a benefit to help offset costs incurred by AI Firefly in presenting the commission.

The artist will submit to AI Firefly an evaluation summary and final report no later than January 1, 2006.



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Frequently Asked Questions

I have a bunch of ideas! Can I submit five proposals?

Applicants may submit only one project proposal. If you have questions about which proposal might best fit the commission's purpose, you may contact AI Firefly—we will be happy to advise you.

I have a great idea for a creative activist action on human rights day, but I'm not an artist. Can I apply?

The commission is specifically intended to support art projects. Applicants must demonstrate a 2-year exhibition or presentation history to be eligible for consideration. Conceptual and unconventional projects are eligible; however, activist actions that are not in dialogue with the contemporary art community of the discipline(s) relevant to the application will not be considered for this commission.

I'm a student. Can I apply?

Students with a 2-year exhibition or presentation history are eligible to submit a proposal for the commission.

I've had a great idea for this public art project for a few years, and have started reaching out to partners and raising money, but we haven't started. Are works-in-progress eligible?

Absolutely. We will consider supporting a project that is already in progress, as long as the project is still in a development stage. Only projects that have already completed production and are seeking "finishing funds" or funds solely for outreach and distribution are ineligible.

I have a really great website with all of my art on it. Can I just send you a URL where you can view my work instead of sending JPEGs as required in the work sample guidelines?

You must submit work samples in the format described in the application form. Websites are accepted only as documentation of internet-based projects.

My project is interview-based, and some of the participants may express views that contradict Amnesty International's positions. Is the project eligible?

We support dialogue around human rights issues of relevance to Amnesty International, and a variety of perspectives may be represented by a single applicant project. However, projects that generally advocate a policy that is not supported by Amnesty International are not appropriate for this commission. Refer to the Amnesty International website and contact AI Firefly if you have questions about the appropriateness of your project.



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My project addresses a human rights issue, but I'm not sure if it qualifies as a priority for Amnesty International. How can I get more information?

First, check the Amnesty International website. Issues that are addressed in current campaigns qualify as human rights priorities. Issues that are not addressed in a current campaign on which Amnesty International has taken a public position are also eligible for consideration. If you can't tell or aren't sure, contact AI Firefly.

More questions? Contact us via e-mail at commission@aifirefly.org. We'll also be regularly updating the Frequently Asked Questions area on our website at www.aifirefly.org/commission.



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About Amnesty International Firefly Project

Amnesty International Firefly Project works to raise awareness of human rights issues by fostering the exchange of ideas, strategies, motives, and methods for creating art that is politically and socially engaged. To that end, AI Firefly produces public events including: workshops, gallery exhibitions, screenings, dialogues and discussions, conferences, festivals, and concerts.

Recent AI Firefly activities include:

- The curation and production of visual and performing public art projects featuring TRYST an Rachel Budde presented as part of the Peekskill Project 2005 and participating in a related panel at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art.
- Presentation of artist talks and performances at Chelsea Art Museum, Exit Art, Tonic, and other venues. Recently featured artists include featuring Bradley McCallum and Jacquelyn Tarry, Debra Pearlman, and Cocorosie.
- Presentation of a 2-day training weekend for high school students working at the intersections of arts and activism. Featured speakers will include Chitra Ganesh, Shira Golding, Empty Vessel Project, and Nicole Opper.

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You may contact AI Firefly at commission@aifirefly.org.