

SAFE HAVENS 2015

10–11 DECEMBER

Biographies



ABAZAR A. BAGI HAMID Musician Singer Songwriter.

Grew up in the cultural belt between Sudan and the Gulf, and his music is both rooted in traditional Sudanese and African music characteristic of the Gulf area, and heavily inspired by reggae and Afro-Latin music. Abazar Hamid started singing for peace in Sudan at an early age, and formed his first band, "Balsam", at university. In 1997, he became well-known at regional level when he joined "Igd Elgalad Band", and in 2005, he quit his job as an architect to start his solo career, launching the project "Rainbow Songs". The project brought together musicians from across Sudan, aiming to slip lyrics about Human Rights and dignity past the music monitoring committee. Abazar Hamid released his first solo album, "Sabahak Rabah" ("Good Morning Home") in 2007 but experienced increasing censorship in his home country. Songs dealing with social and political issues riding Sudan were especially scrutinized, and after severe censorship and verbal threats, Abazar chose exile and moved to Cairo in 2008. In 2009 he established the project "democratizing music" in collaboration with other Sudanese and Egyptian musicians, as a forum to share resources rather than fighting each other. Abazar arrived, as Norway's first official town-musician, in Harstad the 10th of December 2014.



ABDUL HAKIM HASHEMI HAMIDI

Graduated from Herat University in Afghanistan, majoring in history. Currently he is completing a Master in Human Rights and Humanitarian Action at Sciences Po, Paris School of International Affairs. Hamidi started his human rights activities when he was living in Iran as a refugee. Working for Afghan refugees' rights, he was arrested by the police and jailed. After returning to Afghanistan in 2004, he continued the activities on human rights, especially for women's and children's rights as a human rights defender. In consultation with a number of colleagues he established Simorgh Film Association of Culture and Art (SFACA) in Herat province. Since almost 10 years, he has been involved in social development programmes at Simorgh Film Association in Herat, Kabul, Bamiyan and Kunduz. As a general director and artistic director of SFACA, he has produced short and long films; TV serials with human rights focus, specifically addressing women's rights. Hamidi has written articles for websites, newspapers and social media outlets in Afghanistan for public awareness.

ALISON RUSSO Joined IIE in September as Director of the Artist Protection Fund, having most recently left her post curating the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Programs and managing their arts portfolio.

As an artist, she has worked collaboratively to create original devised work with a focus on site specificity, integrated media and civic engagement; her collaborations include live performance, installation and video projects, she has made work and been involved in projects in the U.S., Europe, the Balkans and East Africa. She is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and holds her MFA from California Institute of the Arts.

SAFE HAVENS 2015

10–11 DECEMBER

Biographies



ANNA LIVION INGVARSSON Is head of Gävle Konstcentrum that is a part of the municipality of Gävle and a platform for Swedish and international contemporary art. Artistic freedom of expression has become an important profile for the art center. Gävle Konstcentrum compasses a hall of art with exhibition of contemporary art and a programme which includes comprehensive art education activities. Gävle Konstcentrum is also responsible for public art in Gävle, which entails directing new public art projects for municipal properties and public spaces Gävle Konstcentrum is responsible for Gävle's municipal art. The decision to make municipality of Gävle to a safe haven was followed by political and juridical processes, that finally gave Gävle the right to be part of the network of ICORN – International Cities of Refuge Cities.



BISI ALIMIM Is a **CONTROVERSIAL, PASSIONATE, ENGAGING** and **POWERFUL** internationally renowned researcher, public speaker, policy analyst, television pundit, campaigner and community builder with expertise in sexual health and human and LGBT rights. Alimi was the first Nigerian to openly declare his sexuality on national television in 2004 and this led to threats to his life and his resulting move to the United Kingdom where he was a refugee until December 2014 when he was granted British citizenship. He has engaged with the media for social change ever since. His TEDx talk, "There should never be another Ibrahim" has been listed as one of the 14 most inspiring queer TEDtalk of all time. Alimi has many laurels for his work globally. He is a consultant with the World Bank on the Economic impact of Homophobia and serves on the World Bank advisory board on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. He was a 2014 New Voices fellow at the Aspen Institute and alumni of The Moth. He has been listed four years in a row on the UK LGBT list and was named 77 on the World Pride Power List 2014.

DR. DANIEL GAD Is the Managing Director of the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy for the Arts in Development at University of Hildesheim since 2012. Since November 2015 he is the Network Coordinator in projects with refugees in the city of Hildesheim of the Faculty of Cultural Studies and Aesthetic Communication of the University of Hildesheim as well as Assistant director of the Bachelor Plus Study Program "Cultural Studies, Aesthetics and Applied Arts – Cultural Policy in an International Context" at University of Hildesheim. Dr Gad has been involved in various projects, commissioned studies and conference management as a freelancer. He has also been a free-lance musician and is a member of the Cultural Policy Task Group of Arterial Network, Cape Town in South Africa. He is currently preparing The Hildesheim Arts Rights Justice - Summer Academy with international colleagues.

SAFE HAVENS 2015

10–11 DECEMBER

Biographies



ELISABETH DYVIK is Programme Director of ICORN, a position she has held since 2007. She is responsible for the ICORN residency programme for persecuted writers and artists, handling applications and placements, following up ICORN writers and artists with residency in the cities of refuge, as well as external network building. She has particular expertise within visa and migration issues. Dyvik has a background in working with international affairs, culture and free speech. From 1994–1997, she was Head of the Secretariat for Freedom of Expression in the Municipality of Stavanger, and project manager for the Norwegian Authors' Unions' 100 years celebratory conference on Freedom of Expression. She came from a position as the Head of Newroom research and archive at the national Norwegian newspaper Dagbladet (1985-1995).



FADI ABOU HASSAN is a widely published and award-winning Palestinian freelance cartoonist. He lived as a refugee in Syria until the uprising in 2011, and is known for his many cartoons commenting on the everyday life and political events in Syria and the Middle East in general. His cartoons focus on human rights, women's rights, and political violence taking place in the country. He is very critical of the political elite in Syria. He was Drøbak City of Refuge's guest writer from 2013 to 2015.



FARZANE ZAMEN Musician, songwriter from Tehran - Iran Born in August 1983, Started music with classical guitar from age 17, have written lyrics in English and Persian. Started producing professional music from 2008 , have released 5 singles and 1 album.

SAFE HAVENS 2015

10–11 DECEMBER

Biographies



FERDINAND RICHARD Is the Chairman of the Roberto Cimetta Fund. The fund is working on mobility and fair exchanges between Europe and the Arab World, and supporting structuration for small initiatives there. The fund is engaged in a support process for arab artists and cultural activists which are in exile, especially in the neighbouring countries of the conflict zones. There are several hundreds of cultural activists in Lebanon only, with serious visa/permits problems, and living in a very precarious situation. Ferdinand Richard is also involved in Unesco International Fund for Cultural Diversity since many years, and an active expert for United Cities and Local Governments network on the cultural rights and cultural development issues.



HELGE LUNDE (1961), executive Director of ICORN, the International Cities of Refuge Network. Was the director of Kapittel, Stavanger International Festival of Literature and Freedom of Speech from 1998–2005. In the same period he was responsible for Stavanger as City of Refuge for persecuted writers, and worked together with Norwegian PEN to develop the network throughout Norway and beyond. Mr. Lunde was among the main figures behind establishing ICORN, the International Cities of Refuge Network (www.icorn.org) in 2005. He became its first executive director, a position he has been holding since.



JUDE DIBIA Is an author and equal rights activist from Nigeria. Jude is the author of three successful novels and a number of short stories, which have been featured in both local and international anthologies and magazines. Jude is also a recipient of the Ken-Saro Wiwa Prize for Prose in his native country. In 2005 when his debut novel, *Walking with Shadows*, was published the rights and freedoms of LGBTI persons in his country was under extreme scrutiny with the Nigerian legislature pushing for harsher punishments and laws to proscribe homosexuals. *Walking with Shadows* was bold in addressing the existence of homosexuals in Nigeria and some of the abuses they endure. Jude has continued to write about the abuses of LGBTI people in Nigeria in his short stories. With the passing of the Anti Sam-Sex marriage law in Nigeria in January 2014, Jude made the decision to leave Nigeria before he becomes a target for his writings and stand against the harsh law that criminalizes homosexuality. Jude is the current guest writer of Malmö City of Refuge.

SAFE HAVENS 2015

10–11 DECEMBER

Biographies



KHALED HARARA Was born 1987 in Yemen. He is a renowned Palestinian hip-hop artist who has lived as a refugee in Gaza. His texts discuss the political situation in Palestine from a humanitarian and social perspective and criticise the lack of freedom of expression and the suffering in Palestine under the Hamas rule. In Gaza, Khaled Harara was the first to organise hip hop workshops for youth, focusing on writing texts and on different ways of expressing oneself. As a result of his artistic expression, and his participation as a soldier of the PLO forces, Harara is considered an “enemy of the state”. More than once, he has been to prison, tortured and subject to rough interrogations. In fear of continuing reprisals, Khaled Harara stayed on in Denmark after participating in the festival “Rapolitics”. Khaled Harara was Gothenburg City of Refuge’s guest writer – and the first musician that ICORN accepted – from 2013 to 2015. During his stay in Gothenburg Khaled Harara has taken part in several public events, debates and workshops. He released two new singles with the jazz rock band Makten & Härligheten in May 2015.



KARIN DEUTSCH KARLEKAR Is the director of Free Expression Programs at PEN American Center, the largest branch of the world’s leading free expression and literary organization with a membership of over 4,200 authors, journalists, editors, publishers, and graphic novelists. She focuses on global press freedom, digital rights, and broad freedom of expression issues. Prior to joining PEN, she served from 2001–2015 as director of Freedom House’s Freedom of the Press project, coordinating the production of a flagship annual report that tracks trends in global media freedom and rates every country in the world. As well as acting as an expert spokesperson on press freedom issues at conferences, meetings, and in media appearances, Dr. Karlekar has developed index methodologies and conducted training sessions on press freedom, internet freedom, freedom of expression, and monitoring dangerous speech; authored a number of special reports and academic papers; and conducted research, assessment, and advocacy missions. She also currently serves as a member of the governing council of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) network, and was its chair from 2006-2009.



LINA BEN MHENNI Is an activist, the author of the popular blog “ATunisianGirl”, a human rights defender, a teacher assistant of linguistics at Tunis University (Faculty of Human and Social Sciences). She was born in Tunisia 1983. Based in Tunis, she reported from all across her country during the, 2010–2011, revolution. She risked her safety as one of the few Tunisian cyber activists to criticize the repressive government openly on Internet and international broadcasts before the ousting of the dictator Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali. Indeed, under Zine Al Abidine ben Ali’s dictatorship, her blog was one of the most revealing and scathing criticisms of Tunisian society, focusing on issues like women’s rights and press freedom. She visited local hospitals and took pictures of those injured or killed by the police. She furthermore reported for many websites and news TV channels when foreign journalists could not access the country. Often described as one of the bravest bloggers in the world, much of Ben Mhenni’s writing focuses on freedom of expression and the rights of women and students. Currently, she writes about the incomplete state of Tunisia’s revolution and campaigns for continued reform and democracy.

SAFE HAVENS 2015

10–11 DECEMBER

Biographies



MARITA MUUKKONEN Is the Co-Director and Co-founder of Perpetuum Mobile (Helsinki-Berlin) (www.perpetuummobile.org). She has been Chairperson, Curator and Editor at HIAP, FRAME, FRAMEWORK; and held key functions at NIFCA. Marita has curated exhibitions and projects at museums such as in MoMA, Moderna Museet and Kiasma. Productions at biennials include the Perpetual Pavilion (Venice 2009), The Finnish Pavilion (2009), The Nordic Pavilion (2009), The Arts Assembly (Manifesta 8, 2010), the Nordic Pavillion at Dak'art Biennale (2012), and the School of Displaced Persons (Kiev Biennial, 2015). As co-director of Perpetuum Mobile, she has co-founded long-term thematic projects like Safe Haven Helsinki, the Re-Aligned Project and Pluriculturalism. Marita contributes to a variety of publications.



MARY ANN DEVLIEG Chair of the EU Working Group 'ARJ' on Arts, Rights, and Justice since 2011, Secretary General of IETM (international network for contemporary performing arts) from 1994–2013, DeVlieg was Senior Advisor to freeDimensional, helping artists and culture workers who are threatened, harmed or imprisoned by linking them with a range of shelters and pro bono services. DeVlieg works on individual cases of artists at risk, is a facilitator/consultant evaluating international and EU projects and sets up cultural management training programmes. With an M.A. in European Cultural Policy, she is a co-founder of artsfex, the Roberto Cimetta Fund for Mobility of Mediterranean Artists and Arts Organisers and founded www.on-the-move.org for artists' mobility.



MICHAEL SCHMIDT Is a veteran African journalist, published author, working class historian, media trainer, and free press activist. Long involved with countering discrimination, police repression and xenophobia, he founded the Anti-Repression Network in 2002. He was the founder in 2010 of the Professional Journalists' Association of South Africa, and runs The Ulu Club for Southern African Conflict Reporters. With Rasha Salti of Lebanon, he curates a project on massacre and memory, Not Night but an Absence of Stars. He is the convenor of the South African Cities of Refuge Project which aims to get four African cities to join ICORN.

SAFE HAVENS 2015

10–11 DECEMBER

Biographies



MONIRAH HASHEMI Playwright, actor and theater pedagogue has been working with women and children in Afghanistan since 2004. She is a founder and director of Theater Department at “Simorgh Film Association of Culture and Art” which have been used theater and film as a tool to address the most crucial issues of Afghanistan and reach to communities in isolation with less access to sources and information. Using theater as a platform to discuss the early and forced marriage, violence against women and children, social participation, democracy, health and hygiene and etc. In 2013, Monirah invited by Leif Persson, Riksteatern Varmland to talk about her experience under the title of “Exchange instead of charity, art and culture as a tool for active citizenship and democracy” but she also wrote her new play “Sitaraha – The Stars” based on facts in Afghanistan. The play has performed in Sweden, USA, South Africa, and Canada and will be performed in India, UK and Italy. Sitaraha – the Stars will be performed in Swedish, in spring 2016 which is going to be in a tour with Riksteatern. “The Scarecrow” written by Monirah Hashemi, is a children play, addressing the issues of migration.”



NICLAS TURESSON (former Sandström) Born in 1977. Founder/artistic director of Teater Foratt since 2005. The theatre often explores meetings and glitches between Europe and the Middle East with several languages simultaneously on stage. Niclas has been awarded with several prizes for his work and is currently doing a show at the Swedish Radio Theatre and another show with Ramy Essam and Siham Shurafa at Teater Foratt. Board member of the Swedish Association of Stage Directors since 2011.



RAMY ESSAM Has been called “the man who wrote the soundtrack to the Egyptian revolution”. His music made him one of the leading activists at the Tahrir Square in Cairo during the Egyptian Revolution in the Spring of 2011. Several of Essam’s songs are based on slogans chanted at the Tahrir Square as the revolution evolved, slogans which, accompanied by Essam’s music, reached out to become a powerful way of attacking the regime without resorting to violence. He was subjected to arrests and torture and found it increasingly difficult to be able to perform in Egypt. In 2014 he was invited by the City of Malmö to be the first guest musician in the ICORN system, through a collaboration between the city, Freemuse and ICORN. During his first year in Sweden Ramy Essam has already toured America, Europe and played in Cape Town, South Africa and has signed record deals both in Sweden and the US. He has also studied at the Malmö Music Academy and worked closely with SKAP in artistic freedom advocacy. Ramy Essam’s song Irhal (leave) was elected the third most world-changing song in history by Time Out.

SAFE HAVENS 2015

10–11 DECEMBER

Biographies



REZA MAZAHERI Serves as AFI's co-Director, heading its program on immigrant and non-immigrant petitions for censored artists. For the greater part of his career, Reza dedicated himself to advancing human rights and safeguarding the public interest. Reza is the co-founder of Sethi & Mazaheri, LLC, a law firm dedicated to immigration and asylum law. He is also a former prosecutor and served as a law clerk in criminal court for the Superior Court of New Jersey. In addition to his extensive background in providing public interest based legal services, Mr. Mazaheri worked in the Middle East, North Africa division of Human Rights Watch. Reza received his BA from State University of New York at Stony Brook in Political Science and his JD from Seton Hall University School of Law.



TODD LANIER LESTER Is an artist, writer, and cultural producer. He lives and works in São Paulo, where he is developing Lanchonete.org – a project focused on daily life in the city center – with a group of fellow artists and city dwellers. He has worked in leadership, advocacy, and strategic planning roles at Global Arts Corps, Reporters sans frontières, and Astraea Lesbian Justice Foundation. He founded freeDimensional, a network that helps artists in danger by providing safe haven in participating artist residencies. Todd is a Senior Fellow at the World Policy Institute where he directs the Arts-Policy Nexus; a co-curator for the Arts & Society Team of Cities for People in Canada; and serves as a board member for arts, rights and literary organizations in India, Mexico, Brazil, and the US.



ULRIKA LIND Advisor/Researcher. Through various assignments Ulrika is one of those leading the development of the cultural sector and the positions of music and arts in society. Accessibility and digital venues are two areas covered by current assignments, as well as artistic freedom, cultural diplomacy and new approaches to traditional environments for arts and culture. On behalf of the City of Malmö Ulrika has reported on the implementation of Malmö's first guest program and safe haven for musicians at risk.

SAFE HAVENS 2015

10–11 DECEMBER

Biographies



ZUNAR (Zulkiflee Sm Anwar Ulhaque) is a political cartoonist from Malaysia. With slogan, “How Can I be Neutral, Even My Pen Has a Stand”, he exposes corruption and abuse of power committed by the government of Malaysia through his art. Zunar is now facing nine charges under the archaic Sedition Act and facing possible 43 years imprisonment. He was detained and locked behind bars twice under the Sedition Act – first time was on September 2010 for two days and recently on 10th of February 2015 for three days. Five of his cartoon books have been banned by the Malaysian government on the ground that the contents are “detrimental to public order.” His office in Kuala Lumpur has been raided a few times and thousands of his cartoon books were confiscated. The printers, vendors, and bookstores, have been harassed. Their premises have been raided and they have been warned not to print or carry any of his books or their business licence will be revoked Last October, three of his assistants were arrested and taken to the police station for selling his latest cartoon books. Zunar is the only Malaysian selected by Amnesty International as the first Malaysian for their biggest annual international campaign, ‘Write for Rights (#W4R) 2015’.



ZANDRA TUVESSON Political advisor to the minister of Culture and Democracy in Sweden Alice Bah Kuhnke. Background as a moderator and working with film and literature.