



voices breaking boundaries
crossing borders, sustaining dialogue, inciting change through living art

PRESS RELEASE

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::VBB weaves art and sociopolitical theory to create an exciting new terrain atypical of most arts organizations, educational programs, and networking opportunities::

"Some say that art and activism don't mix... but in times like these, art *must* act--and act ethically. Through a communion of diverse, kindred spirits, VBB's artist-activists refuse to stop dreaming of a better world." -*Ruben Martinez, author of Crossing Over and The New Americans*

Year Eight 2007-2008 Season

As VBB starts off its eighth year, we are in the process of streamlining our production process that includes a strong partnership with community members—artists, educators and activists. Each event listed below began through a conversation with a community member. Even as we post this information on our website, we are setting up meetings through which staff members gather with curators to hammer out final event details.

Some fall highlights include a play by Jihad Abdul-Mumit, an ex-Black Panther who is being brought to Houston by Otabenga Jones and The Menil Collection, an Oud performance by Marcel Khalife an observance of Day Without Art (still in the process of being outlined) and VBB's much loved Valiente Award, a fundraiser that honors Houston-born artist Mel Chin.

Our spring 2008 calendar is very much in its planning stages but some of the events on the table include: a collaboration with Arte Público Press to revive **La Voz Femenina**, our recognition of International Women's Day and present Lisa Hernandez; another **Living Room Art exhibition**; and our much loved and long awaited multidisciplinary event, **Words for Peace 5: Condemn Invasion**.

Keep checking this site for updates—as events will be added and existing events will undergo changes as meetings lead to new ideas. If you have thoughts about shows you'd like to do, email us!

Words Without Borders: *The World Through the Eyes of Writers*

Wednesday, September 26, 2007, 7:00 pm

Cullen Hall, Center for International Studies, University of St. Thomas
3800 Montrose Blvd, Houston, TX 77006

Board a plane to Tehran, explore the highlands of Chiapas, and discover a mystical moonscape village in China. **Zara Houshmand**, **Bapsi Sidhwa** and **Liu Hongbin** will read from "a collection of tales from the whole wild world, perhaps the very next best thing to being there." (*Miami Sun Post*) The reading will be followed by a discussion about the book, "A sample of the riches English readers are missing out on because of the reluctance of English language publishers to invest in translation" Moderated by **Samantha Schnee**, founding editor of *Words Without Borders*, *The Online Magazine for International Literature*. Co-presented by University of St. Thomas' Center for International Studies and *Words Without Borders*; cosponsored by VBB and Brazos Bookstore.

The Shootout: Jihad Abdul-Mumit

Weekend of October 19, 2007, Time/ date TBA

Admission TBA

Performance artist Jihad Abdul-Mumit will present *The Shootout*, a two-person theater performance (1 hour running time) with audience workshop (30 minutes). *The Shootout* is a two-man dramatization depicting the spiritual and psychological divisions that have historically ripped apart just about every semblance of unity amongst African Americans. The shootout starts right from the beginning when Africans were snatched so violently and decisively from Mother Africa. African Americans have been physically, mentally and spiritually attacked in ways that share few rivals in human history. Within one hundred years into captivity, scarcely any original religion, native tongue, name or family existed. The workshop addresses suggestions and advice for dealing with the issues presented in the performance. *Cosponsored by The Menil Collection.*

Marcel Khalife: UNESCO Artist for Peace

Friday, October 26, 8:00 pm

Stafford Centre, Performing Arts Theatre, 10505 Cash Road, Stafford, TX 77477

Marcel Khalife—an internationally praised *oud* player born in Amchit, Lebanon (1950) who has toured the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and the United States—will present an Oud concert. Khalife formed the Al Mayadine Ensemble to revive the musical heritage of his native village and the Arabic chorale. With this group Khalife has toured every continent and performed in many notable festivals with traditional and composed music. *This event is cosponsored by Arab American Educational Foundation, Rothko Chapel, Voices Breaking Boundaries, Bilateral US - Arab Chamber of Commerce, Arab American Cultural & Community Center, Arab America Medical Association, American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Houston Peace & Justice Center & Free Press Houston.* For online reservations, go to Ticketmaster or visit the Stafford Center.

Cultural Narrative: Anthony Shadid

Tuesday, November 7, 2006, 2:30 pm

General admission: Free

Rockwell Pavilion, MD Anderson Library, University of Houston, Houston 77204

Currently with the *Washington Post*, **Anthony Shadid** is a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist who has covered the war in Iraq as an Arabic speaking, un-embedded journalist based in Baghdad since before the invasion. His book *Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War* (2005) was a *New York Times* notable book for last year and is a thorough account of the effects of invasion and occupation on ordinary Iraqis. Shadid will give a talk on his experiences as a journalist in Iraq and Lebanon. Claudia Kolker, who serves on the *Houston Chronicle's* editorial board will participate in the discussion that will be moderated by Dina Al-Sowayel, clinical adjunct lecturing on the religion, history, and other aspects of the Middle East at the University of Houston. Shadid will be available to sign copies of his book after the talk.

Valiente: Honoring Mel Chin

Saturday, November 17, 2007, 7:00 – 10:00 pm

The Station, 1502 Alabama, Houston TX 77004

This Fall 2007, Voices Breaking Boundaries presents our biennial Valiente Award to **Mel Chin**. The **Valiente (Courage) Award** is a fundraiser through which VBB honors artists who take risks through their art. The evening is cohosted by Jim and Ann Harithas along with a committee of more than 60 Houston-residents who are excited to honor for the first time Houston-born artist, **Mel Chin**. The Mayor of Houston has declared November 17, 2007 to be **Mel Chin Day**. Mel Chin is a conceptual visual artist who works in a variety of mediums, and is motivated largely by political, cultural, and

social circumstances. Mel Chin was born in Houston to Chinese parents in 1951, the first of his family born in the United States, and was reared in a predominantly African-American and Latino neighborhood. He worked in his family's grocery store, and began making art at an early age. Mel Chin is the recipient of multiple awards including the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council for the Arts, Art Matters, Creative Capital, and the Penny McCall, Pollock/Krasner, Joan Mitchell, Rockefeller and Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundations and Nancy Graves Foundation Award. He has also exhibited in numerous group shows including the Fifth Biennial of Havana; Seventh Architectural Biennial in Venice, Italy; Kwangju Biennale, Korea; Hirshhorn Museum D.C.; Museum Of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, P.S. 1, and Museum of Modern Art, New York City, NY among others.

Empowering Jena: Keep the Movement Moving

Sunday, December 2, 2007; 7:00 pm

Home of Robert Pruitt

2218 Arbor, Houston TX 77004

Admission: Free

empowering Jena :: keep the movement moving is an exhibition event depicting the power of unified voices speaking out to ears that so easily ignore us as individuals. Jena's escalating racially motivated violence became a focal point for Americans to denounce racism - to come to the aid of a diverse Louisiana community in its cry for justice when the governing officials had stopped listening to the community they serve. On September 20, 2007, racial, economic, political, and many more boundaries were cast aside to raise a unified voice demanding real change in the lives of people living with the effects of intolerance, in this case the Jena 6, their families, friends, neighbors, and the larger community. Forty years from the height of the civil rights movement, the right to assembly is not an obsolete tool, but rather a sharp edge that can cut through a bureaucracy that removes people from their own government.

On the first anniversary of recent racial violence in Jena, Louisiana, VBB brings:

- * photos of the September 20, 2007 march to Jena by internationally acclaimed photographer Everett Taasevigen;
- * performance by Sunni Patterson, a featured artist at premier spoken word venues, including HBO's Def Poetry Jam and many more;
- * talk by Minister Deric C. Muhammad, organizer of the march to Jena, who serves as the Millions More Movement Minister of Justice;
- * Jena 6 update by Jesse Muhammad, the journalist who broke the story.

This event is cosponsored by KPFT Pacifica Radio 90.1 FM.

Film Screening: Meeting Resistance

February 18, 2008, 7:00 pm

Rice Media Center, 2030 University Dr., Houston, TX 77030

Admission: \$5 suggested (no one turned away)

VBB cosponsored a screening of Meeting Resistance, a documentary presented by the Artist Rescue Mission. The film explores the Iraqi insurgency by meeting face to face with individuals who are passionately engaged in the struggle, and documenting for the very first time sentiments experienced and actions taken by a nation's citizens when their homeland is occupied. Voices that have previously not been heard, male and female, speak candidly about their motivations, hopes and goals, revealing a kaleidoscope of human perspectives. Directed by Steve Connors and Molly Bingham, who were present at the screening, this daring, eye-opening film provides unique insight into the personal narratives of people involved in the resistance exploding myth after myth about the war in Iraq and the Iraqis who participate. This event was cosponsored by Houston Indymedia, Rice for Peace and

Justice, and Houston Palestine Film Festival. For more information, contact info@artistrescuemission.org

La Voz Femenina 5: Lisa Hernandez

Tuesday, February 26, 2008, 6:00 pm

Bohemeo's, 708 Telephone RD, Houston, TX 77023

Admission: Free

VBB and Arte Público Press team up for the **5th La Voz Femenina** to celebrate Latina authors!

Lisa Hernández is a native of Pasadena, California, where she lives with her husband and daughter. She teaches English at Los Angeles Community College and coordinates literacy programs for the Los Angeles Unified School District. *Migrations and Other Stories* follows themes of survival, identity, and cultural conflict are woven through the stories in this intriguing and entertaining collection, the winner of the University of California-Irvine's Chicano / Latino Literary Prize. This event is cosponsored by KPFT Pacifica Radio 90.1 FM.

Living Room Art

Saturday, April 19, 2008; 7:00 pm

5036 Jefferson St, Houston 77023

Admission: Free

VBB continues its exciting Living Room Art series by exhibiting new site-specific installations in a living room party, this time in the home of John Pluecker and feature artists Jorge Galvan and Donna Huanca. Living Room Art series brings the visual arts to the neighborhood living rooms of the community and out of the galleries for the public to view the arts in a direct and more accessible way. This series showcases art installations connected to Galvan's and Huanca's family histories and countries of origin—Mexico and Bolivia, respectively. As always, the evening in the east end of Houston included music, food and much more. This event was cosponsored by KPFT Pacifica Radio 90.1 FM.

Houston Palestine Film Festival

May 9-11 and May 16-18, 2008, 7:00 pm every night

Daily admission \$7

The second annual Houston Palestine Film Festival provided an honest and independent view of Palestine, its diaspora, culture, and political travails through the art of film. This group of groundbreaking cinematic texts rises above the degrading stereotypes or reductively politicized depictions that are so familiar to Houstonians. The festival aimed to directly expose the local community to the perspective of artists as a first step toward circumventing the many government and media filters that pollute our understanding of Palestine and the wider region. This year the festival's opening night presented the directors and performers from the Sundance Premiere film *Slingshot Hip-Hop*, Jackie Salloum and DAM (hip-hop group from Palestine). Following the screening, there was a performance by DAM and Mohammad Al-Farra of PR, two groups featured in the film. The concert took place at Warehouse Live in collaboration with Matt Sonzalah of AustinSurreal.com. For a full schedule, visit: Houston Palestine Film Festival. This event was cosponsored by KPFT Pacifica Radio 90.1 FM.